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NARRATIVE

OF THE

AFFAIR OF QUEENSTOWN:

IN THE WAR OF 1812.

WITH A REVIEW OF THE STRICTURES ON THAT EVENT,
IN A BOOK ENTITLED, "NOTICES
OF THE WAR OF 1812."

By SOLOMON VAN RENSSELAER.

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PREFACE.

THE apology for this publication, if any is needed, may be found in that law of a soldier's nature, which prompts him to repel a base attack on the reputation of the brave and the deserving, in the same spirit with which he would meet an assault on a military post or position, which had been committed to his own special keeping. He flies irresistibly to the rescue of his comrade, when in danger, and he is always ready to thrust himself in, to receive any blow which he sees aimed at his beloved commander. The law of resistance is all the stronger, when he finds himself worthy to be honoured with the personal notice of the common enemy, and involved in a common peril with those with whom he stands in the relation of an intimate military connection.

A book, entitled "Notices of the War of 1812," has lately been ushered before the public, which seems to have been specially devoted to the work of detraction and calumny. It would have received an appropriate dedication, "To the spirit of all evil." It comes to us in the guise of history, but care has been taken to work up in its constitution, just truth and principle enough to disguise the poison infused into it, without, in the least degree, diluting its strength, or weakening its virulence. It is offered professedly as a medicine,* skil-

* See the preface to the book, consisting of an extract from Mabby.

fully honeyed over with the appearance of sweet temper, sensibility, and candour, to make the public believe it will do them good to take it; while it is, in truth, a deadly compound into which the apothecary has emptied his most malignant vials, expressly with a view to the production of as much individual suffering and distress as possible.

The author of this work is the too celebrated Gen. Jno. Armstrong, a name entitled to the undisputed distinction of being second to only one in infamous notoriety, out of the host of our revolutionary worthies.* It happened that this man was called, in an evil hour, to assist in the administration of the government, during the arduous and eventful period of our second war with Great Britain. As the head of the war department, he had it in his power to perpetrate the most extensive mischief, not only by his want of capacity, but in the indulgence of an unhappy, restless, and malignant temper; a power which he did not spare to use, at first to the oppression of all individuals whom he honoured with his enmity, and finally to the disgrace and degradation of his country.† That country was fated to

* Arnold's treason was developed in the midst of the war; Armstrong reserved his for the close of it. The success of the design, entertained by the author of the Newburgh Letters, would have been much more fatal to liberty, than would have been the delivering of West Point into the hands of the enemy.

† His interference with the plans of General Wilkinson may serve as a commentary on this text. General W. wished to attack Kingston, and there rest for the winter in good quarters, to organise the different departments of the army, build boats, &c. and carry Montreal early in the spring. This delay could not operate against us; as the St. Lawrence opens between the two places before it does below, the attack could have been made before any reinforcements could arrive from Europe. If General W. had been suffered to take his course the British fleet at Kingston would have fallen into his hands, and the

purchase its release from the hand of this functionary, at no less a sacrifice than the overthrow and sacking of the national capital, by a feeble and insulting foe. Here justice *did* overtake him; and, finding that no artifice could suffice to enable him to throw off the just responsibilities of the position he had occupied, he passed into retirement.*

millions of dollars afterwards expended in ship building for the two lakes would been saved the country; but the secretary was on the spot and manœuvered to defeat his plan. It was said he had an eye on the presidency, and if Montreal could be taken that season, it would facilitate his object, for if successful he would have assumed all the credit; as it was, he managed to avoid the responsibility by throwing all the blame on poor Wilkinson, (see General W.'s trial before the court martial at Troy.—1st. Vol. of his Memoirs)

* The affair at Bladensburgh occurred under General Armstrong's own immediate supervision as secretary at war. In this case, although an attack had been long apprehended, a much larger force, it is true, than absolutely required for the purpose of repelling it, was collected, but no organization or system of defence having been arranged, our army, composed of the regular cavalry, artillery, infantry, and a large body of militia, were disgracefully routed without a show of fight, except from the gallant Com. Barney, by comparatively a handful of British troops, who were exhausted by the fatigue of a long forced march. Near three weeks before the attack was made upon Washington, I received a letter from an officer of high rank in the army, who writes, "such is the want of preparation for defence at this place, that three thousand men can destroy it." Can it be supposed for a moment that if this Author, the dispenser then of honours and promotions in the army, had identified himself with our troops, they would have retreated on the approach of the enemy? No never! yet he was among the first to set the cowardly example. If a more manly course had been pursued, though driven from the first stand, the road passing over a rolling country skirted by woods, afforded many positions, equally as strong and as admirably calculated for the most effective disposition of the different kinds of troops employed, and they might have fallen back from one position to another with equal advantage and have harassed even a larger force of the enemy, so that they never could have reached Washington. But had every effort under this course failed, a few hundred men thrown into the Capitol, would have saved the City. The

His obscurity in his retreat, and his long silence had made his countrymen half believe that, perhaps, his unhappy temper was now softened, that he was melted under the just rebuke and neglect of the world, and that he was preparing, by an honest use of his pen, an instrument which he had shown himself capable of wielding skilfully, to offer to his country a proof of the sincerity of his repentance, in the composition of some work of high historical value. Rumours even, of his labours in this respect had reached the public ear. It was said, his thoughts were turned exclusively to the times of the Revolution and the earlier scenes of our history, and it was understood that nothing would be published, until he should be beyond the reach of any acknowledgments for the important service he should thus render. His injured but generous fellow-citizens had begun, already and by anticipation, to feel that forgiveness, which they only waited the proper occasion to accord and express. These "Notices," however, have effectually put this pleasant delusion to flight: it is now seen how differently his retirement has been occupied,—in brooding over thoughts of malice and revenge,—in nursing the energies of that dark spirit which can endure nothing bright or pure above him, or around him,—in watching the favourable moment for the discharge of his poisoned arrows, and when he could sate himself with victims and sacrifices.

It will be seen that in this work two distinct purposes

six pounders used by the enemy, could have made no impression upon the walls of this building, while a brisk fire from its windows and from the stone parapet surrounding its roof, would effectually have arrested their progress. The same defences might have been made at the President's house, flanked as it was by the state and treasury offices on the right, and by the war and navy on the left. The navy-yard was equally susceptible of defence.

are sought to be effected, though by a single blow. The one is to destroy individuals; the other is to degrade his country. Neither, alone, would satisfy his capacious and comprehensive malice. The shaft, aimed at persons, which did not pass quite through and reach the bosom of the Republic, would not accomplish the errand whereto it was sent, and, to do him justice, it must be confessed that his selections for this effect have been made with singular skill and felicity. For the most part, and always, unless by a mere error in judgment, his attacks have fallen on those, with whose names and reputation the honour and glory of the country were most nearly identified, while his commendations, sparingly applied, but designed to help forward his main purpose, have been reserved chiefly for those in whom the country has no interest, but that their names and exploits should be forgotten; whose celebrity cannot be preserved, but at her expense.

It is not the design of this publication to meet the whole mischief of Gen. Armstrong's book, or attempt the vindication of the many worthy men whom it assails. It is intended to answer a definite and limited purpose; to disabuse the public in relation to a single event, one of the most important of the war of 1812, and to rescue one individual at least from the desperate assaults of this hoary calumniator. It is believed that the interests of history will be subserved by the relation which will be made. It is time that the celebrated affair of Queenstown should be understood, and that the high merits of the citizen general, who conducted the campaign of which this affair was the chief feature, should be placed beyond the reach and danger of detraction. The possession of all the materials necessary for the

complete performance of the task, seemed to impose a corresponding and indispensable obligation. It is not, however, intended to be intimated that the author of this narrative and review is wholly uninfluenced by personal considerations and motives. He purposely embraces the opportunity to do an act of justice to himself, while engaged in vindicating both his country and his commander; and, in so doing, he is not conscious of even the danger of drawing on the indulgence of the public, beyond what it is accustomed to accord to the honest and characteristic frankness of a soldier.

A

NARRATIVE, &c.

A REQUISITION having been made by the general government for a body of New-York militia, it was the pleasure of Gov. Tompkins to appoint Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer to take command of the forces which should be raised for the defence of the northern and western frontiers of this State, in answer to that requisition. That officer entered upon his command on the 13th of July, 1812, having done me the honour to request my services as his aid. I was anxious to serve my country in the contest in which she was engaged, and I did not hesitate, therefore, to take the situation thus offered me.

On reaching the Niagara frontier towards the middle of August, the General found his troops scattered along the whole line of the river, and exposed to be cut up in detail. Having inspected his ground, his resolution was promptly taken to concentrate his forces at Lewiston. Orders to that effect were immediately given. His camp was formed, and the duties of discipline and instruction were entered upon without delay. From the moment of his assuming the command, his position was one of the utmost exposure and danger. He lay within sight of a powerful enemy, separated from him only by a narrow river, for the crossing of which, that enemy possessed every facility. He had a line of thirty-six miles to guard, and his whole force was considerably less than one thou-

sand men,* many of them without shoes, and all of them clamorous for pay. Of ammunition, there were not ten rounds per man, and no lead. There was not one piece of heavy ordnance in the whole line, and there were no artillerists to man the few light pieces which we possessed. Add to this, that the troops could not take or keep the field, for want of tents and covering; that the medical department, if one could be said to exist at all, was utterly destitute of every thing necessary for the comfort of the sick or the disabled; and that there was among the men that entire want of subordination, to say nothing of discipline, which always characterizes raw militia; and some idea may be formed of the condition of our army.

The condition of the forces on the opposite bank of the river, was in contrast with ours in every particular. There was a well appointed, and well found army, under the most exact discipline, and commanded by skilful and experienced officers. Every important post, from Fort Erie to Fort George, was in a defensible state, and the enemy had possessed himself of a very commanding position on the heights of Queenstown, which he was rendering every day more secure and formidable. He had, moreover, the mastery of the Lakes, and was at that moment industriously employed in using that advantage to increase his numbers, and add to his supplies at Niagara.

In this state of things, the armistice which had been concluded between Gen. Dearborn and the Governor General of Canada, was announced to Gen. Van Rensselaer, and it became necessary to settle with the commander of the British forces opposite to us, terms of an arrangement for the government of the armies on the

* On the first of September, he had only 691 men fit for duty.

Niagara, during the continuance of the armistice. The performance of this duty was assigned to me, and a suggestion having been made by me to that effect, I had the authority of General Van Rensselaer to attempt such an arrangement, as, besides securing the objects contemplated by Gen. Dearborn, might enable us, pending the armistice, to use the waters of the Ontario, as a common and undisturbed highway for the purposes of transportation. My interview with Gen. Sheaffe, on this mission, was one full of interest. As was anticipated, the terms proposed by me were met not only with objec tions, but at first by an unequivocal refusal to accede to them. The following clause, proposed and insisted on, on the part of the British General, will serve to show how wide of each other were our respective views and interests. "It is moreover to be distinctly understood, that there is not any thing in the foregoing articles, to be construed into granting facilities for the forwarding of troops, stores, &c., which did not exist before the declaration of the armistice, farther than they are to pass unmolested as therein provided, in the mode and by the routes assigned to them prior to the cessation of hostilities." The result of a protracted discussion, however, was an agreement which confined the restrictions to the movements of troops, stores, &c., to the country above Fort Erie, and left such movements elsewhere, entirely unshackled and free.

The importance of this arrangement has never been sufficiently appreciated. The immediate and pressing necessity for it on our part, was, that without it, the ordnance and supplies intended for our army, having been collected at Oswego, were not likely ever to reach us; the roads were impassable, especially for heavy cannon, and the highway of the Lake was beset by a triumphant ene-

my. As soon as the negotiation was successfully completed, an express was despatched to Col. Fenwick at Oswego, to move on with his supplies with all possible expedition. But General Van Rensselaer was enabled to use this advantage for another purpose, of great importance to the service. No sooner was the way open, than an express was sent to Ogdensburgh with an order for the removal of nine vessels from that place to Sackett's Harbour. To this movement was Commodore Chauncey indebted for the ascendancy which he for a time was enabled to maintain on the lake, and without which the subsequent descent at Little York could not have been attempted.

Col. Fenwick had not arrived, when orders were received from Gen. Dearborn, to put an end to the armistice. He was, however, as it turned out, then approaching his place of destination, at which he shortly afterwards arrived. He was directed, out of abundant caution, to land at the Four Mile Creek, instead of attempting to reach Fort Niagara. As soon as this was effected, and in the same morning, having been charged with the delivery of the notice terminating the armistice, to the British Commandant, I crossed over from the Fort to discharge the duties of this mission, which I did in a personal interview with Gen. Sheaffe.

It will be seen by a reference to the documents collected in the appendix to this Narrative, that from the first, Gen. Van Rensselaer acted on the certain knowledge, that it was expected of him to make a descent upon Canada at the earliest possible period. He knew that neither the government nor the country was prepared to be satisfied with defensive measures only. Nothwithstanding this, the first glance he had of his position, after he reached the frontier showed him at once, that

nothing could be attempted, at least for a considerable period. Indeed his own condition was critical in the extreme, and even his ability to defend himself in case of attack, was more than doubtful. Gen. Dearborn, the commander of this entire district, had been ordered by the Secretary of War, in his instructions of the 1st of August, to make a diversion in favour of Gen. Hull, at Niagara. There was no preparation to do any thing effectual under this order. Before Gen. Van Rensselaer reached the frontier, Gen. Brock was on his way, with a competent force withdrawn from his posts on the Niagara, to meet Gen. Hull, leaving behind him however, a force abundantly sufficient, with the reinforcements they were then receiving, for the protection of the posts he had left, against any attempt which could have been made on them on our part; sufficient even to have made it quite possible to carry the war to the American side of the river, with every prospect of advantage and success.

The first relief which Gen. Van Rensselaer experienced, was in the arrival of Col. Fenwick, with ordnance and stores, on the 4th day of September, as already related. Before this, however, and while as yet not a man had appeared to reinforce his numbers, the disgraceful fall of Detroit and surrender of Gen. Hull, had been announced, and Gen. Brock had been actually seen returning to this frontier, and conducting along the heights of Queenstown, an American army as prisoners of war. It was not much to be wondered at, that this event "spread great alarm among the inhabitants, and produced strong symptoms of distrust among the troops."

During the month which succeeded the announcement of this event, the condition and prospects of the army were, on the whole, but little improved. There was, in nearly all this time, every reason to expect an attack.

Every thing indicated great activity on the British side, and preparation for some signal blow. In the condition of Fort Niagara, it was natural to suppose that that would be the first object. It is believed that an attack was only prevented by the *show* of defence which was set up. The Mess House was unroofed and mounted with cannon, and a Battery was planted on the bank of the river above the Fort, while, in case of a hostile attempt, the safety of the troops was attempted to be provided for, by a new road cut through the woods at a distance from the river, in the rear.

Early in September, Gen. Van Rensselaer was advised by Gen. Dearborn, that the enemy was preparing to make an effort to reduce this army to the mortifying situation of Gen. Hull's, and that he must be ready "to make good a sure retreat." The abandonment of the Fort was also expressly recommended, and the fear expressed, that, if retained, it would prove "a trap for the garrison," for examinations had shown that it was utterly untenable and indefensible against a serious attack. The importance, however, of maintaining all his positions, led the General to the determination to put forth every effort and energy, to this effect, and to adopt the unalterable resolution to dispute every inch of ground with his adversary, in case of an attempt to dislodge him. The following letters, the one addressed to Gen. Dearborn, and the other to Governor Tompkins, will show in some measure, the condition of things at their date, as well as the opinions and resolution of the Commanding General. His whole force at this time, was about sixteen hundred men.

Extract of a letter From Major Gen. Van Rensselaer to Major Gen. Dearborn.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 17th September, 1812.

The situation of my little army is becoming every day more and more interesting, and I believe existing circumstances would fully warrant me in saying critical. As soon as our operations at and near Fort Niagara indicated a disposition to maintain the garrison, the enemy became exceedingly active. New works were thrown up, and old ones modified to meet us at every point. Their works appear now to be all completed, and they are daily receiving very considerable reinforcements of men. Last evening, the Royal George arrived at Fort George, with about two hundred artillerists. About one hundred boats, loaded with stores for the British army in Upper Canada, have lately passed up the St. Lawrence. Two regiments of troops are also on their way up, and I am induced to believe that those lately arrived at Fort George, are detachments from those regiments. The information which you had received on the subject of the enemy's reinforcements and destination, was undoubtedly correct. Troops are also coming down from Fort Malden to Fort Erie. Indeed there can be no possible doubt, that the enemy are very actively engaged in concentrating their forces to act in this vicinity. When the scene of action will open, I know not; it probably cannot be far distant. Such movements of the enemy have been observed for three or four days past, as have induced many to believe, that the hour of attack was at hand. On the 13th instant, boats were engaged in putting a considerable detachment of troops on board a ship, which, at evening, got under way from Fort George and stood out into lake Ontario. It was apprehended that those troops were, that night, to be landed on the south

side of the lake, in the rear of our guards. The night before last, the enemy moved some boats from the landing at Queenstown, down the river. This excited alarm, and late last night a rumour ran through the camp, that the garrison was actually summoned to surrender. I only mention these things to show you what apprehensions prevail. Should the enemy attack, I have every reason to believe we shall be very severely pressed; but so serious will be the consequences of any retrograde movement, or a total abandonment of Fort Niagara, that, upon mature consideration of all circumstances, I have determined to hold, if possible, my present position, and dispute every inch of ground. My force bears no proportion to the duties required; besides, the discipline of the troops is not such as to warrant perfect reliance, and many of our arms are not fit for action. These are considerations which you, sir, and my fellow-citizens will do me the justice to bear in mind, whatever result may happen. For the application of the means entrusted to me, I hope I shall be able to justify myself to my country. My greatest fear is, that the troops destined to reinforce me, will not join me in season. In every calculation heretofore made upon my reinforcements, both as to time and strength, I have been disappointed. Col. Bloom's regiment, which was reported to me before its arrival, for seven hundred, is but little more than four hundred.

I am erecting a store-house and magazine upon the high grounds, in the rear of my camp; but for want of teams, tools, and nails, the work proceeds but slowly; we build with logs, and rive our shingles from bolts of oak. It is with extreme difficulty we can procure teams upon any emergency. The horses of the cavalry and flying artillery are badly supplied with hay, and as for *grain*

they are almost entirely destitute. I have completed the road through the woods, from my camp to the garrison.

Major General Van Rensselaer to his Excellency Governor Tompkins.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 17th September, 1812.

Sir,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your packet by Major Noon, who arrived in camp last evening. The duties of the day are too pressing to allow me the leisure I could wish, to answer your letter particularly. I must, therefore, beg leave to refer your Excellency to my despatch of this date to Major General Dearborn. I cannot, however, but express the satisfaction I feel at the approbation, which my conduct thus far in the campaign has received. To perform my duty, arduous as it is, is comparatively easy, but to determine what my duty is, in a wide field for action, where every thing is unshaped and uncertain, is often a task of no small difficulty; I am conscious to myself that I have studied it faithfully, and performed to the best of my ability. My situation is growing every hour more interesting, perhaps critical. The particulars you will find in my letter to Gen. Dearborn; but with my little force I shall certainly attempt to hold my position, with full reliance upon your Excellency's assurances, that every effort will be made to support me. *A retrograde movement of this army upon the back of that disaster which has befallen the one at Detroit, would stamp a stigma upon the national character which time could never wipe away.* I shall therefore try to hold out against superior force and every disadvantage, until I shall be reinforced. I am happy to learn that the money to pay off the troops is at hand. The information cheers our camp. I announced it in orders this morning; I

hope they will soon realize their expectations, for in truth, their wants are many.

I have the honour, &c.

His Excellency Governor Tompkins.

It will be observed, by reference to other official letters in the appendix, that as late as the 26th of September, the General was informed from Head-Quarters at Greenbush, that a strange fatality had pervaded the whole arrangements for reinforcing his post, and apprehensions were expressed that the reinforcements would still arrive too late to enable him to maintain his position. The same despatch, however, conveyed the expression of a confident hope, that he would not only be able to meet the enemy, but *to carry the war into Canada.* It was added that "at all events we must calculate on possessing U. Canada before the winter sets in." In truth, the time was now at hand, when, if at all, the long contemplated blow must be struck, and as the enemy had not brought the war into our camp, it was soon determined to carry it into his own.

With the arrival of the reinforcements, which were now constantly coming in, the confidence of the army increased to such a degree, that the desire for an opportunity to wipe out the disgrace of Hull's surrender could no longer be restrained. The clamour for active operations became general, and Gen. Van Rensselaer resolved to gratify his own inclinations and those of his army, by commencing offensive operations; with this view he arranged a plan to be submitted, and then summoned his principal officers to a council of war. For farther detail as to his situation and views, see his letter to Gen. Dearborn of Oct. 8th, published in Appendix, No. I.

From the correspondence with Gen. Smyth, in rela-

tion to the subject of his naming an early day when he, in connection with other general officers, and commandants of regiments, would meet Gen. V. R. in council, it is plain that his second in command had no cordial disposition to act in concert with him. And in farther confirmation of the fact, is his letter reporting his arrival from Buffalo, dated 29th Sept.; in this, although an entire stranger to the country, he goes out of the way to obtrude his advice upon his commanding officer, touching movements and localities of which he knew nothing.* These will bear out the prevalent opinions of the day, as to his presumptuous conduct; the cause of that, as well as of his subsequent evasive conduct, is merely a matter of conjecture. It might have proceeded from disappointment in not obtaining full command on this frontier, or it might have been because his fastidiousness could not be reconciled to the idea of being under the control of a militia general. Be it as it may, he was highly censured by all who were aware of his conduct, and many, among whom I was one, were of opinion that coercive measures should be resorted to, to bring him to a sense of his duty; and perhaps if Gen. V. R. is censurable for any sin of omission while on the frontier, it is for not pursuing this course. But as the season was rapidly drawing to a close, and as he was urged by his instructions to effect something decisive before he went into winter quarters, his situation was one of extreme delicacy. He did not wish to be drawn from the object he had in view, by a controversy with Gen. Smyth—particularly so, as he knew that the forces which by this time had collected in his own immediate vicinity, were amply sufficient for his purpose.

* Appendix, No. II.

The plan which Gen. V. R. intended to have submitted to the council in question, and the objects he expected to gain by it, if carried out, are indicated in the following extract of a letter from him to Gen. Dearborn. "That we immediately concentrate the regular force in the neighbourhood of Niagara, and the militia here make the best possible disposition, and at the same time the regulars shall pass from the Four Mile Creek, to a point in the rear of the works of Fort George, and take it by storm. I will pass up the river here and carry the heights of Queenstown. Should we succeed, we should effect a great discomfiture of the enemy, *by breaking their line of communication, driving their shipping from the mouth of this river; leaving them no rallying point in this part of the country—appalling the minds of the Canadians, and opening a wide and safe communication for our supplies. We shall save our own land, wipe away a part of the score of our past disgrace, get excellent barracks and winter quarters, and at least be prepared for an early campaign another year.* As soon as the result of the council shall be known, I shall advise you of it."

His want of accommodations against the inclement weather became greater, in the same ratio as his strength increased, until the discontent in consequence, reduced his camp to a state bordering on mutiny. The calls to be led to battle, became more and more urgent and imperious, and the general found himself at last obliged either to dismiss the troops, or to gratify their wishes. Several days elapsed without having a time specified by General Smyth for holding the council, and the prospect of doing it being as remote as ever, Gen. Van Rensselaer could no longer withhold his orders for offensive measures. The different posts of the enemy having been previously

examined by various officers of our army, while on official business there,* our knowledge of his localities, of course, was accurate, and having obtained satisfactory information as to the force stationed at his defences, particularly at those about Queenstown, the general felt himself warranted in making an immediate attack on that place. Accordingly on the 10th October, 1812, thirteen boats, capable of transporting three hundred and forty men with their equipments, were brought down under cover of the night, upon wagons, from Gill Creek, two miles above the falls, and launched in the river at the only practicable spot at the time, at the present, Lewiston ferry. Lieut. Col. Fenwick's flying artillery were ordered to be up in season from Fort Niagara. Gen. Smyth was also directed to send down so much of his command as could be spared from Buffalo, and the attack was to have been made at 3 o'clock, on the morning of the next day. "Experienced boatmen were procured to take the boats from the landing below, to the place of embarka-

* On my last visit there, the very day before the action, while returning to my boat, accompanied by Col. Mc Donald and some other officers, attracted by the appearance of a body of Indians a short distance to our left, I expressed a desire to obtain a nearer view, as I might know some of them. This gallant and accomplished officer immediately led the way. On our route we passed two beautiful brass howitzers of a small size, calculated to be carried on pack-horses, the wheels about as large as those of a wheel-barrow. I remarked, "these, at all events, are old acquaintances of mine." They had formerly belonged to Wayne's army, and had been left at Detroit, where, as Col. Mc D. stated, they were taken by Gen. Brock and brought down, with a view of being sent to England, as a curiosity. I observed in a jocular manner that I felt partial to those pieces, and we must try to take them back. He replied in the same pleasant humour, that they must try to defend them. Little did he suspect that every thing was arranged to make that trial, or that the next day he and his chivalrous chief were doomed to fall and I to be grievously wounded.

tion. Lieut. Sims was considered the man of the greatest skill for this service; he went ahead, and in the extreme darkness passed the intended place, far up the river, and then in a most extraordinary manner, fastened his boat to the shore, and abandoned the detachment. In this front boat he had carried nearly all the oars, which were prepared for the boats. In this agonizing dilemma stood officers and men, whose ardour had not been cooled by exposure through the night to a most tremendous north-east storm, which continued unabated for twenty-eight hours, and deluged the whole camp. Col. Van Rensselaer was to have commanded the detachment.

"After this result, I had hoped that the patience of the troops would have continued until I could submit the plan suggested in my letter of the 8th, that I might act under, and in conformity to, the opinion which might be then expressed. But my hope was idle; the previously excited ardour seemed to have gained new heat from the late miscarriage. The 'brave were too mortified to stop short of their object, and the timid thought laurels half won by the attempt.' On the morning of the 12th, such was the pressure upon me from all quarters, that I became satisfied that my refusal to act, might involve me in suspicion, and the service in disgrace."*

Except in some minor details, the arrangements for another attempt were the same as on the last. The boats were brought back after daylight, and left on the shore opposite Queenstown, where they remained the two subsequent days in full sight, and within musket

* See despatch from G. V. R. of Oct. 14th, to Gen. Dearborn, in Appendix No. II.

shot of the enemy.* The appearance was regarded as a feint, and they became impressed with a belief, that they were intended to carry an armament down the river against Fort George. Our operations at and near Fort Niagara, before alluded to,† which they had lately seen effected opposite that post, confirmed the belief to such a degree, that their principal force was stationed there; and when Gen. Brock was afterwards first informed of the firing at Queenstown, he declared that it could not possibly be an attack. "It was nothing more than the war between sentinels."‡ To all this, in connection with their faith in the impregnable nature of the place, we may ascribe the reason why they were so weakly garrisoned here; and that they were so, was divulged to us through such sources as unequivocally to justify an attack, and it was decided that it should be made under my direction on the morning of the 13th.

During the two intervening days, although yet suffering under the effects of a fever, by which I had been confined to my bed until near the moment of being called out to lead the first intended expedition, I was constantly employed in personally attending to complete the arrangements for battle, and in instructing the different participators in the particular duties to be assigned them.

Mr. Cook, a highly respectable citizen of Lewiston, (father of the Hon. Bates Cook, lately a member of congress, who, if I mistake not, with one or more bro-

* The Niagara river being but about three hundred and fifty yards wide at this place, a British sentinel was killed at his post by a shot from our side. See Correspondence on this subject in Appendix, No. —.

† See Correspondence with Col. Fenwick, Appendix, No. II.

‡ See Appendix, No. II.

thers volunteered his services for the occasion), was this time entrusted with the duty of procuring trustworthy boatmen, at whatever expense; and they with the boats were put under his direction. To Mr. Lovett was committed the management of the fire from the eighteen-gun battery on the heights of Lewiston. This was an important duty. The balls from this battery were to pass over the heads of the assaulting party, in order to reach the enemy in the village of Queenstown. The duty in the result was satisfactorily performed, though at the expense of Mr. L.'s hearing. He never recovered from the astounding effects of his own fire.

Lt. Col. Christie, who had lately arrived with a reinforcement of near four hundred regulars, having begged the honour of a command in the expedition,* was accordingly ordered up to Lewiston with three hundred of his men. The remainder were left to guard the boats and stores which he had brought with him, to the mouth of Four-Mile Creek. Three hundred militia-men, who had been in camp several months, and were much superior to the newly recruited regulars in point of discipline, together with forty picked men from Capt. Leonard's old company of artillery from Fort Niagara, under Lieuts. Gansevoort and Rathbone, with all the equipments belonging to their proper line of service, composed the detachment under my own immediate command. An equal number from each of these two detachments, together with the forty artillerists, were to proceed from the encampment, and effect the first descent upon the enemy's shore. Lieut. Col. Fenwick, and Major Mullany, were to follow with about five hundred and fifty regulars, and some pieces of flying artil-

* See Col. Fenwick's correspondence, No. II.

lery, and then the militia in order, as fast as the boats could carry them.

The arrangement, however, was partially deranged, when we reached the bank of the river. Here the troops were halted; and while accompanied by my two acting aids, Lush and Gansevoort, I was inspecting the condition of the boats, which, by the way, appeared to be in perfect order, the regulars got possession of the narrow dug way leading down to the water's edge. In this emergency it became necessary either to countermarch part of this force, a movement which we apprehended might arouse the attention of the enemy, or to fill the boats with regular troops in the first place, to the partial exclusion of the militia. The latter alternative was adopted, and Major Morrison was ordered to follow with the remainder of the detachment, in the return boats.

When the troops had embarked, to the number of twenty-five in each boat, I first walked along the line to see that all were ready, and finding they were so, leaped into the one containing the picked artillerists, and gave the word to push off. The order was promptly obeyed. Counterbalancing, in the favouring eddies on either side, the lee-way made in crossing the main current, within ten minutes all the boats, excepting three, struck the enemy's shore without difficulty, at the identical spot aimed at. Having landed, the boats were immediately sent back. The troops were formed, and charged up the bank, where they met the enemy. A short, but severe engagement took place, with heavy loss on both sides; but we were victorious, and the enemy gave way, and fled towards Queenstown, on our right. The position we occupied cut off their retreat to their main battery on the heights. Finding myself very

much crippled now, by a number of wounds, and with the loss of blood, unable to proceed any farther, I inquired for Lieut. Col. Christie, but not hearing of him, I directed the troops to fall back a few steps, under cover of a bank, where they were secure from the desultory shots still occasionally pointed at them. In this situation, a pause of some time occurred, while my staff were out in a vain search for my missing second in command. Had he been on the spot, the affair would have proceeded without a moment's delay. But although the business yet to be done was all-important to the success of our enterprise, as long as there were any hopes of Lieut. Col. Christie's arrival, I was unwilling to entrust its execution to such very young men, the highest of whom in rank were only captains, not six months in service. But he was not to be found; and as it was now broad daylight, any farther delay was highly hazardous; and I therefore, in an agony of feeling which belonged to the occasion, directed the troops to incline a little to the left, and ascend the heights by the point of the rock, and storm the battery, which by this time had opened its fire upon our place of embarkation. Lieut. Gansevoort, being well acquainted with the ground, was ordered to lead the way, at the head of the picked artillerists, assisted by Lieut. Randolph. Lieut. Rathbone having fallen mortally wounded at my side; other troops followed, Major Lush, my other acting aid, bringing up the rear, with orders to shoot down the first man who offered to give way. The noble* young men obeyed my directions, and, in due time, the report of a well-told volley, and the cheering shouts of victory, reached my ear, assuring me of their complete success.

* For the names of these gallant young men, see Appendix, No. I.

Having thus accomplished the work with two hundred and twenty-five men, for which six hundred and forty had been detailed, nothing farther was necessary for the full attainment of the objects of the enterprise, than to secure the advantages gained. Nothing was easier; but an unfortunate occurrence of adverse circumstances, turned the fortunes of the day against our arms. I could not participate, personally, in the subsequent events; and I must refer to Wilkinson's Memoirs, with Capt. Wool's report,* and to General Van Rensselaer's report,† for a statement of them. I may add, as a conclusion of my own observations, however, that it had been anticipated that the enemy might open the fire of a piece of flying artillery, from the village of Queenstown, upon our place of embarkation, as soon as they were aroused to action by our attack. Mr. Lovett's attention had, therefore, been particularly directed to this contingency the day before; and, in compliance with the instructions then received, as soon as there was light enough, he turned the long eighteens of the battery on Lewiston heights upon this spot, in such a masterly manner as to drive the enemy out before their battery was carried. The ferry was unannoyed after this, except by the fire of one gun; but the distance was too great, and the formation of the banks rendered this fire almost ineffectual. I was afterwards told that none of our boats were injured by cannon shot. The artillerists, who were purposely attached to the storming party, and provided with matches, were to have turned the fire of the battery on Queenstown heights upon the village, and particularly upon the lower one-gun battery above alluded to, which was about a mile below,

* See Appendix I. † See Appendix II.

and could not be reached from any other quarter. But some one of the number, in a fit of over-zealous patriotism, frustrated the design, by spiking the cannon as soon as captured.

Priding myself as I do, on the habits acquired under the tuition of Generals Wayne, Wilkinson, and Posey, I am not conscious of ever having neglected the performance of the most minute detail appertaining to my duties as a military man. Nor do I recollect of a neglect on this occasion. Selected to lead an expedition on which the result of a whole campaign depended, my reputation was at stake, and my anxiety to give my country a glorious offset to the disaster of Hull, rendered me, if possible, doubly vigilant. Every preparation deemed essential was made under my own inspection, and every contingency was provided for a successful issue; and if the result was unfortunate, it certainly was not on account of any defect, either in the plan of the expedition, or in the arrangements made to carry it into execution. Had Lieut. Colonel Christie, for instance, effected his landing in conjunction with myself, no delay need have been occasioned at the important crisis when I became disabled. The batteries would have been secured before the enemy were prepared to annoy us, and our primary object, an unmolested passage to the reinforcements, would have been secured in season. To his failure may mainly be attributed all our disasters. Yet the apology which he makes for it, in his report to Gen. Armstrong, (the loss of a rowlock and an unskilful pilot,) would, in a spirit of charity be deemed sufficient, were it not known that other boats besides his own, were ordered by him to fall back at the same time.* His re-

* Capt. Lawrence, in one of the three unsuccessful boats, has repeatedly declared that he fell back by Christie's orders.

turn damped the hitherto irrepressible ardour of the militia; Major Morrison, instead of leading his detachment across the river, suddenly found himself taken too unwell for the duty; and though the dreaded fire on the ferry was now silenced by Mr. Lovett's battery, and the heights were captured, yet the panic had become so general, that but a small portion of our army could be prevailed on to cross. The remainder, to their eternal shame be it said, instead of lending their aid to sustain their gallant brethren in their victorious career, stood passively, and saw them cut up, and captured in the end, by a force amounting to about one-third of their united number.

Having finished the brief personal narrative of the affair of Queenstown, which it had been my purpose to offer, the object of this work now requires, that I should proceed to an equally brief review of those extraordinary "Remarks" applicable to this affair, which, with others of a similar kind to be found in Gen. Armstrong's book, form the distinguishing features of the work, make it characteristic, and mark it for his own.

No. I. "The false and improbable report of a spy was made the ground-work of the expedition." The report of this spy was neither false nor improbable; it was true, and was corroborated and confirmed by other information already had, in relation to the British force at Queenstown. That he was not mistaken about their numbers, and that the detachment which landed with me was more than enough to overpower them, was manifest in the result. Their whole force at Queenstown proved to be comprised of two flank companies of the 49th, a few militia, and Indians. After the foot-hold was obtained, if General V. R.'s army had crossed the river

its capacity for contending with the whole of the force of the enemy, is a matter about which no doubt can be entertained.

II. "Every military enterprize should have some useful and important object." "Yet," says our historian, "according to the General's official report, his views were limited, on this occasion, to the expulsion of a small British detachment from Queenstown, and the occupation of that village as winter quarters for his troops."—Now observe the fairness of this bold assertion. General Armstrong knew that the views of General Van Rensselaer were not thus limited, and no such inference whatever was authorized to be drawn from any official report of his. It was, indeed, casually mentioned in his letter to the Secretary of War, the day after the battle, that the possession of the village of Queenstown, if taken, would, as an incidental advantage, have afforded to the troops a shelter from the inclemency of the season. And this expression is seized on as indicating and comprehending the whole objects of the expedition, to the exclusion of a despatch, known to General Armstrong, in which these objects were particularly detailed. The following single quotation should cover the historian with shame:—"Should we succeed, we shall effect a great discomfiture of the enemy, by breaking their line of communication, driving their shipping from the mouth of this river, leaving them no rallying point in this part of the country, appalling the minds of the Canadians, and opening a wide and safe communication for our supplies; we shall save our own land, wipe away part of the score of our past disgrace, get excellent barracks and winter quarters, and, at least, be prepared for an early campaign another year.

III. "The troops employed, or intended to be employed on this service, were principally militia, and therefore not better chosen than the object itself. Why this was so, is a problem not yet satisfactorily explained. If it originated in an *esprit du corps*, or belief of militia efficiency, there may be some colour of excuse for the error; but if, as reported, the arrangement was made to *gratify the ambition of an individual*, the act was not merely injudicious but criminal." There was no choice in the matter. The intention was, to have employed all the disposable force: militia constituted the greatest proportion. The deduction, then, at the commencement of this note, may be ascribed to the wilful misrepresentation of the writer, for he had the official returns before him; but if it is only to be considered applicable to the first detachment, it is false: for, as already stated, that division contained forty regular artillerists and three hundred militia; the other, three hundred regulars. As to the selection of a leader, Gen. V. R. made it, after due reflection and consultation, and it behoves me not to discuss its propriety: but it may not be amiss to state, that it seems to have met the approval even of the author of the report from which the historian draws so largely for his embellishments. He, it appears from this document, though not disposed to waive his rank, yet, in fact, was not disinclined, and did consent to serve under an officer of established reputation. The truth is, there was no other officer on the ground who had seen service; and a glimpse at the incidents of an earlier period of my life, might perhaps be sufficient to show, that General V. R. believed he had some good reasons for making the selection he did.*

* When about eighteen years of age I joined the army, under the command of General Wayne, as a Cornet of cavalry, and before twen-

IV. "If it be necessary to pass an army over a large and rapid river, demonstrations should never be omitted,

ty was promoted to the command of a troop. In the action of the 20th August, 1794, I received a wound through my lungs, which was at first considered, by the surgeons, to be mortal, but which my youth and strong constitution surmounted. How I acquitted myself, the despatches from General Wayne to the war-department bear ample testimony. Suffering yet from the effects of my wound, and there being no prospect of active service, in March, 1797, I went to Philadelphia, with the intention of resigning my commission. At the war-office I found General Wilkinson. Both himself and Mr. Secretary M'Henry expressed great satisfaction at seeing me. The latter observed, that he intended that day to have written to me: and when informed that I was there with a view to resign, and engage in some other business, he was kind enough to interpose a strenuous opposition, in which he was strongly seconded by the Secretary, on the ground that my services were required for a delicate, perhaps dangerous duty. I was at once informed, that if I would undertake the enterprise offered me, I should have a blank furlough in my pocket, with the power to fill it up at my own discretion. Such a mark of confidence induced me to consent. I returned, made my arrangements, and, without delay, followed General Wilkinson to Fort Washington, (now Cincinnati.) Here I found the men of my old troop dismounted. I had not seen the fine fellows since the great battle in which they bore a distinguished part. The meeting was as unexpected as gratifying. I immediately passed over to Lexington, Ky., to facilitate and superintend the purchase of horses to mount my men, and in a few days reported myself and troop ready for duty: when, in compliance with my orders, (see App. order 14,) then received, I proceeded to Knoxville, and remained there until the object for which I had been sent was accomplished. When the conduct of France towards this country rendered it necessary for the general government to augment the army, and when Washington was again called upon to place himself at its head, he sent for me; and in the presence of Generals Hamilton and Pinckney, questioned me about the state of my wound, and soon after I was appointed a Major of cavalry. By the law subsequently enacted for reducing this army, two troops of cavalry were retained without a field officer. I, of course, was among the disbanded, but not until after every effort in my favour had been made by Governor Jay, the gallant but ill-used Gen. Schuyler, General Hamilton, and others.—(See Letters, Appendix, 5.) Soon after, I received the appointment of Adjutant General of the militia of

provided the extent of your own force will justify detaching."

On the occasion of the first intended attack, on the 11th October, an exception to this rule occurred. The object was, to surprise the enemy in the night; and it would have succeeded, beyond all question, if the descent had been effected. For the 13th, sufficient demonstrations were made for the purposes required in the rule. The appearance of our boats at the ferry two full days before the action, was regarded as a feint, intended to mask some other movement, and so it was supposed it would be regarded; and as already stated, in connection with this, the extension of our works at Fort Niagara, together with the presence of forty additional boats near it, at the mouth of Four-mile Creek, induced the British commander to believe, as it was designed he should, that Fort George was our object; and there, as the result proved, he was fully prepared, but not at Queenstown. The departure of General Smyth and Colonel Scott from their respective posts, at Black Rock and the Falls, was not observed by the enemy until after we had secured a foot-hold on his shore, as they marched in the night. If the remainder of the troops had crossed over, and sustained us then, the concentrated forces of all the British garrisons could have made no impression upon us.

this state, under that great and good man, Gov. Jay. This appointment I held during the respective administrations of his successors Governors George Clinton and Lewis; for nine years during Governor Tompkins's administration, and, though subsequent to the events on which the mention of these facts is intended to bear, for nearly the whole period of Governor Dewitt Clinton's. Now, knowing all this, as he did, and that I had obtained these marks of consideration and of confidence from such high sources, the question is, Was General V. R. justifiable in selecting me to take the lead in the expedition? And if so, although I do not deny that my ambition was highly gratified by the selection, wherein consisted its *criminality?*

V. "Every officer charged with the direction of a military enterprise, should, before commencing it, assure himself, that the means necessary for that purpose are provided and ready for use."

Having been confined to my bed previous to the first attempt, General Wadsworth, a brave and meritorious officer, was requested to superintend the movements of the boats. We had forty lying in Gill Creek, the whole number of which could not be brought down without alarming the enemy with apprehensions of an attack at the real point. However, he procured as many as were required: and, after the failure of the first attempt, (the causes of which have heretofore been stated,) other efficient means were taken to regulate the employment of them; and notwithstanding the allegations of certain individuals, who sought an excuse for their own misconduct, it is due to Mr. Cook to say here, that his department was well regulated; and as long as the troops showed a disposition to cross, it was well conducted. If there was any irregularity afterward, the fault was not so much in his boatmen as in his passengers.

VI. "An army crossing a river in small detachments, and consecutively, exposes itself to be beaten in detail by an enemy much inferior to itself; another important maxim, which on this occasion was forgotten or disregarded." The enemy were unprepared for an attack, as already fully shewn; our first detachment proved itself able to master their garrison; and after the mastery was gained, our boats were abundantly sufficient to have carried over our whole army, (with the exception of such parts as were necessary for the defence of certain posts,) before ten o'clock in the morning. Now the British force,

under General Sheaffe, did not arrive on the spot *until four o'clock in the afternoon.*

VII. "The place selected for crossing the river was ill-judged." That this stream is "a sheet of eddies," as quoted by Gen. A., is true, no doubt; and this is the very fact which accounts for the pains taken to secure the services of *experienced boatmen:* yet any person may realize the ease with which a passage, under the guidance of skilful pilots, may be effected by crossing over the spot in the ferry-boat of the present day. And what if it was commanded by the enemy's batteries? The bearing of his guns had been examined beforehand, and the whole case provided for. Beginning the embarkation under the cover of the night, we had a chance of escaping observation: and even if we had been observed, we were soon out of the range of their batteries; and at the place selected for our landing, nothing but small arms could be used against us.

VIII. "The omission to ascertain, previously to the adoption of the project, the political sentiments of the militia on the question of invasion, and that of not promptly recalling the advanced corps after having ascertained that point, were errors of great magnitude.—Both measures were entirely within the General's power, and had they been adopted, would either have prevented the enterprise, or have terminated it at a moment when, by the death of Brock and the flight of the enemy, we should have had the credit of a victory, instead of the discredit of a defeat. And lastly, nothing could be more ill-judged than the attempt made to withdraw the corps, after it had lost its ascendancy in the field, and when the

means necessary for the passing the river, or of covering the retreat, no longer existed."

In his despatch of Oct. 14, General V. R. writes—"The partial success of Lieut. Elliot at Black Rock, (of which I have, however, received no official information,) began to excite in the troops a strong disposition to act. This was expressed to me through various channels, in the shape of an *alternative*, that they must have orders to act, or, at all hazards, they would go home." The alternative which Gen. V. R. thought his own reputation and the good of the service required him to adopt, under all the circumstances of the case, was to take the troops at their word, and lead them into action. The attempt on the 11th was the consequence. It resulted in a failure. So far from being damped by this, the General adds, "The previously excited ardour seems to have gained new heat from the late miscarriage: the brave were mortified to stop short of their object, and the timid thought laurels half won by the attempt. On the morning of the 12th, such was the pressure upon me from all quarters, that I became satisfied that my refusal to act might involve me in suspicion, and the service in disgrace." Now it was known to every officer on the ground, that such a state of things existed; and as the troops were aware that they could not act against the enemy without invading them, in the name of common sense, what stronger evidence of the political sentiments on the question of invasion could be required?

At the period of Gen. Brock's fall, and the flight of the enemy, the troops were still crossing, we had a prospect of a victorious termination of the enterprize, and no one then supposed the militia would change their minds; of course, the idea of a retreat could not be entertained.

Gen. V. R. crossed over about this time, leaving directions for the militia to follow: but learning subsequently that he was not obeyed, he returned, with a view of ascertaining the cause, and to expedite their movements. It was then, for the first time, he found them recreant to the promises which their late clamour for action implied. After trying all the means that human ingenuity could devise, to arouse them to a sense of their duty, he was obliged to give up the effort in despair.—He then despatched a note to General Wadsworth, informing him of the predicament, and leaving the course to be pursued much to his own judgment; assured him, if he thought best to retreat, every thing in his power would be done to render the measure as easy and as safe as possible.

The note, however, reached its destination too late. Reinforcements of the enemy, under Gen. Sheaffe, were by this time near at hand, and very soon our little band of heroes were attacked, and after another obstinate fight, overpowered. The General closes his narrative of the events of this eventful day, thus:—"I can only add, that *the victory was really won*, but lost for want of a small reinforcement; *one-third part of the idle men would have saved all.*" If this presumption is a just one, and it never has been doubted, it furnishes a striking commentary on the masterly judgment displayed in arranging the plan of operations; for with the facts before us, all will admit that the General had indications enough, to justify him in his dependence upon the support of these "*idle men.*"

It has been shown, that we were successful in every important measure, up to the time of Gen. Sheaffe's arrival. Now, as we had possession of the main road leading from Queenstown heights through the village to Fort

George, over a cleared and flat country, he, (Gen. Sheaffe,) was obliged to file off when he came near Queenstown, to his right, to the small village of St Davids, which was four and a half miles west in the rear of Queenstown. From thence, ascending the heights, he had four and a half miles more to march east, in order to give battle to our troops, and recover his battery. Our force would have outnumbered his, three to one, and if the militia had done their duty, his defeat would have been certain. In that case, his retreat would have been cut off; the distance for him being fifteen miles, for us only six by the direct road, to Fort George.* This post would have fallen without striking a blow, for there were not more than twenty men left in it, under Major Evans, to keep up the cannonade between it and Fort Niagara, and all the objects aimed at, would have been acquired.†

General V. R. has always been ready to meet an inquiry into his official conduct throughout this campaign, and has boldly sought it, but none has ever been accorded him. Let then the appeal now be made to any practical military man, with the circumstances all before him, as to the correctness of his conduct generally in this affair, and particularly on the occasion when he suggests a retreat to a corps, which he rightly supposed would otherwise be crushed. "Nothing could be more ill-judged than the attempt," in the opinion of General Armstrong; but the weight which should be attached to any opinion of his, in which the conduct of either General V. R. or myself is implicated, will stand a better chance of being justly estimated, when these notes shall have been read. The estimable private as well

* See Map.

† Our winter quarters would not have been confined to Queenstown, but to that place and to Newark, if expedient.

as public character of Major General Van Rensselaer, is known and established throughout the United States. Devoting as he does the remnant of a useful and honourable life, to promote objects of Christian benevolence and charity, it might have been expected that even General Armstrong's malevolence would have found no gratification in intruding upon his retirement and interrupting him, in his benevolent pursuits.

After the battle of Queenstown, General Dearborn, professing to be satisfied and pleased with my conduct, told my friends Generals Lewis and V. R. at Greenbush, that a separate corps would be organized for me, of which they informed me by letter while confined with my wounds at Buffalo ; * but owing to the public defence, which as a man of honour, I found myself obliged to set up against the political attacks on the conduct and character of General V. R., who then was a candidate for the governorship against Governor Tompkins, I became obnoxious to the dominant party of the day, and the intention was never carried into effect.

Dr. Eustis, before he resigned as secretary at war, entered my name upon the list for the appointment of Brigadier General. He afterward told me, when in Congress together, that he was astonished that his successor General Armstrong had not appointed me.

The present venerable Mayor of Baltimore, General Samuel Smith and the Hon. D. R. Williams, chairman of Committee on Military Affairs in Congress, called together of their own accord, upon the Secretary of War, to urge my appointment in the army.

* I was taken to this place by a company of Major Mosely's Militia Riflemen—they volunteered to carry me on their shoulders all the way to Albany.

When the much persecuted and unfortunate General Wilkinson was ordered by General Armstrong from New Orleans to take command of the Northern army, he too urged my appointment, but was refused. On his arrival at this place, however, he sent for me and wished me to accompany him to the frontiers. I replied that I would willingly do so, if I thought he had the least chance to effect any thing of consequence; but knowing that the deficiency of almost every necessary article, and the want of a proper organization in any department of the army, would prevent his descent upon Montreal that season, I declined. *

Gen. Harrison, with whom I had served in General Wayne's army, also solicited my appointment, as his second in command in the northwestern army.

It will be recollected that I never resigned my commission in the regular service, but lost it when the army was curtailed; my claim to promotion, therefore, was valid still, whenever any augmentation took place. Besides this, the validity of such claims was admitted in the case of other officers of Wayne's army, and they were promoted accordingly. Harrison, who was a lieutenant when I commanded a troop, was commissioned a major-general; Covington, a subaltern in our corps, a brigadier-general; Ball, my cornet, a lieutenant colonel, &c. &c. Yet, the above applications in my behalf—and they were certainly entitled to some consideration, on the score of the character of the applicants—were all superciliously denied, on the ground

* When informed by me of the state of his command, he could hardly credit, it for Armstrong, in reply to written queries put to him on the subject, had stated every thing to be in complete order, (See W's memoirs); after he had visited his line of posts, however, he wrote me that things were not only as bad as I had represented, but *much worse*.

as alleged to Wilkinson and others—*that I was too unpopular to raise a corps.* Where is the evidence of this fact? Was Gov. Tompkins, with whom, unfortunately, I had been at political variance, aware of it when I accepted his invitation, as a member of his own family, to assist him in defending the city of New-York from an expected invasion? Was it indicated in the resolution unanimously passed by the council of appointment, to confirm my brevet as Major General, in the militia of this state,* or was my election to congress by my neighbours, without opposition in one instance, and by a triumphant majority in another, any evidence of it? No, it only existed in the brain of a calumniator. Gen. Armstrong was at that time governed by the basest of feelings and motives; and in the antipathies engendered in times long past, and by circumstances which should be forgotten, is to be found the whole secret of his present peculiar hostility, both to Gen. V. R. and myself.

COPY

* The commander in chief having raised by brevet Solomon Van Rensselaer to the rank of major-general in the militia of this state, on account of his distinguished gallantry and public spirit in the military service of his country, and especially during the late war on the Niagara frontier, therefore resolved, that the said Brevet be confirmed, and that a commission be issued to him as major-general accordingly, in the militia of this State.

DEWITT CLINTON, *Governor.*

(*Signed,*)

STEPHEN BARNUM,
WILLIAM ROSS,
GEORGE ROSECRANTZ,
STEPHEN BATES.
} *Members.*

APPENDIX.

The annexed Letters and General Orders will show the difficulties General Van Rensselaer had to contend with; and the measures he pursued to meet them; his devotion to the interests of the service, the comfort of the troops, and the honour of their arms. The Letters which passed after the battle between him and General Sheaffe, rival chiefs as they were, in fame and in courtesy, will be read with interest and profit.

APPENDIX, No. I.

Extract from Wilkinson's Memoirs, 1st vol., from page 564 to 581.

Major Gen. Dearborn had been placed in the command of the Northern frontier early in 1812, with views to the invasion of Canada, but if I am rightly informed, without being furnished with any plan, general or particular, or any indication of the course which might probably be pursued for the direction of his operations. Lake Champlain presented the great military highway to the centre of the enemy's province, and the American settlements at the foot of that lake were remote and exposed; the general therefore judiciously determined to take his first position with the regular recruits in that quarter; but in the progress of the campaign, the misfortune at Detroit put the western frontier of the State of New York in danger, and in defect of regular troops, the general called on the Governor of the State for a body of militia. This gentleman who distinguished himself as a supporter of the war did not hesitate to comply with the requisition and Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer was selected for the command, The motives for this selection were equivocal, but in relation to the public service it was well judged, because of the amiable disposition, the elevated patriotism, the sound discretion, the solid judgment, inflexible honour and firm resolution of this officer. But Gen. Van Rensselaer was opposed in politics to Governor Tompkins, and had differed also with him in opinion as to the expediency of the war, and at the same time they were rival candidates for the government of the State. In the spirit of the times, when almost every public measure is regulated by interested intrigue; the suggestion may not be uncharitable, that this

command was offered to Gen. Van Rensselaer, in the expectation that he would refuse it, and that his refusal would affect his popularity. But this virtuous citizen, although in possession of the first patrimonial estate in America, and in the enjoyment of every blessing which can sweeten domestic life, notwithstanding his opposition to the policy of the war, was too sensible of the obligation which he owed to his country and its government, to pause a moment for the course he should pursue. He received the orders of Gen. Dearborn, and commenced his march for the frontier, accompanied by Col. Solomon Van Rensselaer, adjutant general of the State of New York, of whom I must be permitted to say a few words. This high-minded citizen soldier, and honourable man, made his noviciate in arms under my orders as a Cornet of dragoons, more than twenty years before, and at that tender age was distinguished for his coolness and intrepidity in action. His father had served as a lieutenant colonel in the revolutionary war, and fought and bled for his country in the affair near Fort Ann, against the 9th British regiment of Infantry, in 1777; he had transfused his spirit and patriotism into his son, who in my presence during the campaign of 1794, fought with *sang froid* and bled with complacency. Rising by regular promotion to a troop, he was particularly noticed by General Washington, and raised to the command of a squadron; but he was among the disbanded at the reduction of 1800; and after that period, although anxious for a military appointment to which he would have done honour, his politics, as a good federalist, opposed an insuperable bar to his applications.

On reaching Utica, General Van Rensselaer was called to Sacketts Harbour, by a rumour of the movements of the enemy in that quarter, and from thence after a short halt he proceeded to Ogdensburgh, where Colonel Van Rensselaer projected a handsome enterprize, which failed through the want of a few regular troops; an armed vessel of the enemy, lay along side a wharf adjoining the British magazines at

Prescott, on the opposite shore. Colonel Van Rensselaer proposed with one hundred and twenty men, to ascend the St. Lawrence four or five miles, after night, cross the river, fall down under the Canada shore, take possession of the buildings and carry the vessel, boarding her by land and water at the same time. Volunteers from the militia, turned for the enterprize at evening roll-call, but at midnight they had changed their minds, and as they believed there existed no competent authority to order them beyond the limits of the state, this feasible project was abandoned.

From Ogdensburgh, General Van Rensselaer returned to the southward and established his Head Quarters at Lewiston, on the Strait of Niagara, whilst General Smyth, of the Continental service, was ordered to take post in the vicinity of Black Rock at the head of the Strait. This association was unfortunate, as the latter gentleman's high military pretensions, could not be reconciled to the command of a militia general, on his first tour of duty, however respectable as a citizen; and it is presumed this temper produced a spirit of insubordination, repulsive to the harmony and concert which is essential to cordial co-operation, and that the public service, was sacrificed to personal sensibility.

The campaign glided away under the tardy levy of regular troops, and the dilatory assembly of the yeomanry; and it was October before General Van Rensselaer found himself in force to warrant of offensive operations. It appears that at this period, his solicitude for his own reputation and more especially the interests of the service, and the honour of the country, determined him to strike at the enemy. Pursuant to this object, on the 5th of October, he, by letter, required a conference with Brigadier General Smyth, and the commanding officers of corps under his immediate orders. He addressed Major Gen. Hall to the same effect; and after these preliminary steps, on the 8th, he made the following interesting communication to the commander in chief.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, Oct. 8th, 1812.

Sir,—

It is now nearly three months since, in obedience to the call of my country, I took the field to form and discipline an army, and to shape and direct a campaign on the very extensive frontiers of this state. This service, even in prospect, presented innumerable difficulties and embarrassments. Thus far I have met them in that manner which my own mind justifies and I trust my country will approve. After a general review of our frontiers, my own judgment did not suffer me to doubt that the Niagara river must be the scene of our decisive operations, and I selected this neighbourhood as the place best adapted to our measures, and here encamped.

Well knowing that the duties of the station you hold were complicated and embarrassing, I have patiently endured much, that the affairs of my department might embarrass you less. The crisis through which I have passed for the last month has been trying indeed; particulars upon this occasson are unnecessary; but the result has justified my measures and I am satisfied. Yet I am well aware that any merit which may be attached to this negative service, will not satisfy the expectations of my country: to have barely escaped disaster, will not be thought enough; the object of the war remains unaccomplished, a new crisis is opening, and as in it, you, sir, as well as I, have a deep stake of responsibility, I shall with great freedom, state to you a number of facts, submitting my opinions connected with them, and with deference leave the general conclusion to your own judgment; and as the honour and interests of the United States, your own character and mine, are most intimately connected in the subject of deliberation, I hope and trust it may receive all the attention which its importance merits.

The United States declared the war. One army has surrendered in disgrace, and another has but little more than

escaped the reiteration of the blow. The National character is degraded, and the disgrace will remain corroding the public feeling and spirit, until another campaign; unless it be instantly wiped away by a brilliant close of this.—A detail of particulars is needless; you, sir, know service. Our best troops are raw; many of them dejected by the distress their families suffer by their absence, and many have not necessary clothing: we are in a cold country, the season is far advanced, and unusually inclement; we are half the time deluged with rain. The blow must be struck soon, or all the toil and expense of the campaign go for nothing or worse than nothing, for the whole will be tinged with dishonour. With my present force, it would be rash to attempt offensive operations. I have only seventeen hundred effective men* of the militia on this whole line. The regular troops have nearly all arrived in the vicinity of Buffalo, except Schuyler's regiment. The batteaux have not arrived and I learn they very narrowly escaped the Royal George, at the mouth of Genesee river, where she had just cut out the schooner Lady Murray, and a Revenue Cutter. But two or three companies of the Pennsylvania troops had arrived at Buffalo, when I received my last advice from thence.

Under these circumstances and the impressions necessarily resulting from them, I am adopting decisive measures for closing the fall campaign; but shall wait your approbation of the plan, and the arrival of a competent force to execute it. I have summoned Major Gen. Hall, Brig. Gen. Smyth, and the commandants of the United States Regiments, to meet me on a consultation; and I am well aware that some opinions entitled to great respect, will be offered for crossing the Niagara a little below Fort Erie, and pursuing the march down the river. I think this plan liable to many objections. The enemy have works at almost every point, and even an

* His reinforcements had not then arrived.

inferior force might hold us in check and render our march slow; by taking up the bridges at Chippewa, they might greatly embarrass us; the cleared country is but a mile or two wide; one flank would be constantly liable to be galled by Indians from the swamps; for a considerable distance, the rapidity of the current, and the height of the banks render transportation across the river impracticable; of course, our supplies must follow the line of march, with the trouble and hazard of them every day increasing; and should the enemy retreat from Gen. Harrison, they would have a double object in intercepting our supplies; and by falling on our rear, and cutting off our communication, we might experience the fate of Hull's army. Besides these, and many other objections, there is no object on that side, until we should arrive at the commanding heights of Queenstown, which are opposite my camp.

The proposal which I shall submit to the Council will be, that we immediately concentrate the regular force in the neighbourhood of Niagara and the militia here, make the best possible dispositions, *and, at the same time, the regulars shall pass from the Four-mile Creek to a point in the rear of the works of Fort George, and take it by storm; I will pass the river here, and carry the heights of Queenstown.* Should we succeed, we shall effect a great discomfiture of the enemy by breaking their line of communication, driving their shipping from the mouth of this river, leaving them no rallying point in this part of the country, appalling the minds of the Canadians, and opening a wide and safe communication for our supplies. We shall save our own land—wipe away part of the score of our past disgrace, get excellent barracks and winter-quarters, and at least be prepared for an early campaign another year. As soon as the result of the Council shall be known, I shall advise you of it. I have received your letter of the 29th ultimo, and shall acquaint Mr. Harrison with your direction. I regret the

slowness of the mail. I have furnished an escort for it from this to Buffalo.

With great respect and consideration, &c.

STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

Hon. Major Gen. Dearborn.

From this letter, it will appear to any professional man acquainted with the country, and the circumstances of the enemy at that time, that, although Gen. Van Rensselaer was not a military man, he reasons very much like a soldier; his point of attack was selected with masterly judgment, because, from its apparent difficulty it was least suspected, when, in fact, the counter currents under the opposite shores, and the narrowness of the river,* rendered it the preferable traverse; and as to the plan of the enterprize *which he had finally determined on*, it was so simple and so perfect, that an act of God alone could have prevented the success, which would have reflected honour on a master of the trade.

If the reader will cast his eyes over the annexed map, he will perceive General Van Rensselaer's camp at Lewiston, (B) from whence a road (MM) has been cut by his order, six miles through a wood, to (N), at Four-mile Creek, where sixty batteaux lay equipped for service; from whence it is four and a half miles by water to Fort George, under a high bank, which conceals the movement until the boats turn the point of Niagara. The ground is so much elevated at Lewiston and Queenstown, that it may be called a mountain; it is an immense platform which overlooks the plain below, until it is terminated by Lake Ontario. Of consequence, every movement from Fort George would have been under the General's eye, as well at that of the officer at Fort Niagara. It was General Van Rensselaer's intention, to have marched General Smyth and one thousand

* Three hundred and fifty yards wide.

five hundred regular troops, to the mouth of the Four-mile Creek, by the new road (MM,) cut for the purpose, there to have been held in readiness to embark at a minute's notice. Queenstown was then to be attacked; and as it was guarded by two companies of the 49th regiment, with a party of militia and Indians only, it would have been carried with the battery on the heights, as afterwards happened. These operations, within hearing of Fort George, could not fail to draw forth the garrison to sustain the post of Queenstown, and repel the invaders; and, as soon as the British column was discovered in motion, General Smyth would have embarked by a signal, and when it approached Queenstown he would have been ordered by a courier, to proceed to the attack of Fort George, which could not have been anticipated more than twenty minutes, and being deprived of its garrison, resistance would have been vain. In the spirit of these memoirs I shall forbear to condemn, except when urged by facts. That so feasible a plan, and one of such importance to the national honour and interests should have failed was to be deplored, and the occasion certainly presented a fair subject for inquiry; because it could not have happened without some fault, which, for the good of the service, should have been ascertained, especially when General Van Rensselaer defied investigation; but the crooked policy of a corrupt cabinet will not bear inquiry, except when it is deemed necessary to hunt down obnoxious individuals.

Disappointed by causes he could not control, in the meditated attack on the 11th of October, to which the impatience of the militia had compelled him to assent, before his measures were matured; and not having heard from Brigadier General Smyth on the 11th, in answer to his note of the 5th; General Van Rensselar hoped the temper of the troops would allow him time to repeat his summons for a consultation with the most experienced of his officers who lay near Buffalo, with the intention to carry into effect his original design; but the ardour of those under his immediate orders,

had been heated by disappointment, and numbers now proposed to him the alternative, of *marching against the enemy, or marching home.* In such a dilemma he could not hesitate, and on consulting the principal officers of his camp, and finding them earnest for an immediate attack, he determined to carry the works of the enemy on the morning of the 13th, before day; having the evening before received a reinforcement of three hundred and fifty regular recruits under Lieutenant Colonel Christie, who volunteered his services.

No fault can be found with the plan of attack, except in the deficiency of transports, which, consisting of thirteen batteaux, limited the assaulting party to three hundred noncommissioned officers and privates, and this defect is ascribed to the deficiencies of competent means in the quarter-master's department. The embarkation was to have taken place on the morning of the 13th, before day, in the following order, viz. Col. S. Van Rensselaer with three hundred militia, Lieut. Col. Christie, with three hundred Regulars; the whole to be commanded by Colonel Van Rensselaer; Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick and Major Mullany, were to follow with five hundred and fifty regular troops, and some pieces of flying artillery, and then the militia, according to order. The attacking party was formed in good time, and marched off by files abreast, Lieut. Col. Christie leading the regulars, and Major Morrison the militia. When he arrived at the bank of the river, Col. Van Rensselaer halted the detachment, and descended with Major Lush and Lieut. Gansevoort, who acted as his aids, to see the boats arranged, and formed in two divisions, one for the regulars, and the other for the militia; as it was intended their embarkation should be simultaneous, as far as the craft would suffice to receive them: but, in descending the bank by a narrow path, which had been dug out of it, the regular troops got possession of it, to the exclusion of the militia; and the necessity occurred of countermarching a part of the

regulars, or embarking the whole, in the first instance; and to save time, the latter plan was adopted, and Major Morrison ordered to follow with the militia in the return boats.

Col. Van Rensselaer had examined the bearings of the enemy's heavy battery, on the mountain at (c,)* and that of one gun below Queenstown, at (L), and perceived that by by crossing the river near the gorge of the mountain, he should in a great measure escape the range of their shot; he accordingly made his traverse at (o), and landed on a narrow beach, under a steep bank of forty feet elevation; but, unfortunately, three of the boats which put off with him, bearing Lieutenant Colonel Christie,† Captain Lawrence, and a subaltern whose name is not known, returned without the orders of Col. Van Rensselaer, and carried back seventy-five of the detachment, which too sensibly impaired his force; *but the retreat of this party produced a most pernicious effect on the militia, particularly as it made no immediate attempt to effect a passage.* The natural reflection produced by this spectacle in the minds of the yeomanry was, "If the regular troops cannot cross the river, surely it cannot be expected of us." Thousands of spectators were looking on, and there can be no doubt that the incident staggered their resolution.

The narrowness of the river, without the agency of spies, would necessarily warn the enemy of the movement; and they were prepared for Van Rensselaer's reception. Their force at Queenstown, when the attack was made, consisted of two companies of the 49th regiment, I suppose one hundred and sixty men, with a party of militia, and a few Indians, who resisted their landing. They ascertained Van Rensselaer's approach by the sound of his oars, and opened their fire from

* See the Map.

† Col. Christie whose high standing as an officer placed his courage above suspicion is no more; but Capt. Lawrence, who lives, and is second to no officer of his grade, alleges, I understand, that he retreated by order of Col. Christie. At all events, no satisfactory reason has been given for the boats not proceeding.

the top of the bank, as soon as they could discern his movements, by which Lieut. Rathbone was mortally wounded on board of Col. Van Rensselaer's boat. The landing was effected with two hundred and twenty-five men, who formed under a very warm fire, climbed the bank, and routed the enemy at the point of the bayonet, without firing a shot; but in this operation Ensign Morris was killed, and Capts. Malcolm, Armstrong, and Wool were wounded; Col. Van Rensselaer himself was peculiarly unfortunate, and, to the accident which befel him, the day's disaster may be partly attributed; he received one ball in his hip, which passed out at his spine, two in his thigh, one of which lodged, two in his leg, and a sixth contused his heel; he however kept his feet, and the enemy having fled towards the town, he ordered Capt. Wool, the senior officer capable of duty, to ascend the mountain and carry the battery; giving him a direction for his movement, by which he would avoid the enemy's artillery; placing Lieuts. Randolph and Gansevoort, who volunteered, at the head of the little column, and Major Lush, another volunteer, in the rear, with order to put to death the first man who should fall back. During this time, he had concealed his wounds under a great coat borrowed from Major Lush; and when the party had filed off before him, no longer able to support himself, he fell to the ground. It was just then clear day-light, and he found himself among the wounded, the dying, and the dead. A crust of bread, and some water, furnished by one of the former, prevented him from fainting. The anguish resulting from his wounds, and every selfish feeling, was silenced by the contemplation of his wounded companions; but even these lost much of their interest, when put in competition with his anxiety for the safety and success of the gallant detachment he had ordered to the heights. It pleased, however the great Disposer of events, that this anxiety should be short-lived; and for the blood he had thus spilled in his country's cause, he was remunerated by the consoling shouts of victory. I had marked the patriot sol-

dier some eighteen years before, when "the callow down had scarce begun to shade his cheek, and call him man," giving earnest of future promise, and asserting claims to future fame; I beheld him in a gallant charge at the head of his troop, shot through the body and with the blood oozing from his lungs, still smiling with complacency; yet since the days of General Washington, nor the blood of the father, nor the son has found grace in the eyes of the executive; and amidst thousands of offices which have been indiscriminately lavished on the worthy and the worthless, this faithful citizen and honourable man has not been deemed worthy of attention.

The sequel of the affair of Queenstown, about which we have heard almost as much misrepresentation and folly *as about the battle of Bridgewater*, will be best described by an extract from the official letter of General Van Rensselaer;* and the following report of Capt. Wool will put to rest several controverted points.

Buffalo, Oct. 23, 1812.

Dear Sir,—

I have the honour to communicate to you the circumstances attending the storming of Queenstown battery on the 13th instant; with those which happened previously, you are already well acquainted.

In pursuance of your order we proceeded round the point, and ascended the rocks, which brought us partly in rear of the battery. We took it without much resistance. I immediately formed the troops in the rear of the battery, and fronting the village, when I obsreved Gen. Brock with his troops formed, consisting of four companies of the 49th Regiment and a few Militia, marching for our left flank. I immediately detached a party of one hundred and fifty men, to take possession of the heights above Queenstown battery and to

* See Appendix, No. 2.

hold Gen. Brock in check, but in consequence of his superior force they retreated. I sent a reinforcement, notwithstanding which, the enemy drove us to the edge of the bank, when with the greatest exertion we brought the troops to a stand, and ordered the officers to bring their men to a charge as soon as the ammunition was expended, which was executed with some confusion, and in a few minutes, the enemy retreated. We pursued them to the edge of the heights, when Col. Mc. Donald had his horse shot from under him, and himself mortally wounded. In the mean time Gen. Brock, in attempting to rally his forces, was killed, when the enemy dispersed in every direction. As soon as it was practicable, I formed the troops in a line on the heights fronting the village, and immediately detached flanking parties which consisted of Captain M'Chesney of the 6th Regiment, Lieut. Smith and Ensign Grosvenor with a small detachment of Riflemen which had that moment arrived; at the same time I ordered Lieut. Gansevoort and Lieut. Randolph with a detachment of artillery to drill out an eighteen pounder which had been previously spiked, and if possible to bring it to bear upon the village. The wounded and prisoners I ordered to be collected and sent to the guard house. *About this time*, which was between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, Lieut. Col. Christie arrived and took the command. He ordered me across the river to get my wounds dressed. I remained a short time. Our flanking parties had been driven in by the Indians, but Gen. Wadsworth and other officers arriving, we had a short skirmish with them and they retreated, and I crossed the river.

The officers engaged in storming the Battery, were Capts. Wool and Ogilvie; Lieuts. Kearney, Hugonin, Carr, and Sammons of the 13th; Lieuts. Gansevoort and Randolph of the Light Artillery, and Major Lush of the Militia. I recommend to your particular notice Lieuts. Randolph, Carr,

and Kearney, for their brave conduct exhibited during the whole of the action.

I have the honour to be
Your most obt. humble servt.,
JOHN E. WOOL,
Capt. 13th Regt. Infantry.

Col. Solomon Van Rensselaer.

The names of the officers who accompanied Col. Van Rensselaer on this hardy enterprise, deserve to be engraved on the scroll of fame, for surmounting obstacles almost insuperable, in the face of a determined enemy, under a heavy fire, and dislodging and pursuing a superior force, composed of two Companies of the 49th British Regiment, advantageously posted, with a body of auxiliary Militia and Indians: It was indeed a display of intrepidity rarely exhibited, in which the conduct and the execution were equally conspicuous. Here true valour, so often mistaken for animal courage,* was attested by an appeal to the bayonet, which decided the conflict without a shot. It must not be forgotten that two hundred and twenty-five men accomplished what six hundred were intended to achieve, and the reader will bear in mind, that with the single exception of Col. Van Rensselaer, it was the first military combat in which either men or officers had been engaged. Under *all* the circumstances, and on the scale of the operation the impartial soldier and competent judge, will name this brilliant affair the chef-d'œuvre of the war.

* In the American service, temerity is too often taken for bravery, yet the distinction between them is as wide as between blindness and vision. Marshal Saxe when a youth was seen to court danger in the battle of Malplaquet, and afterwards at the siege of Bethune in Flanders, for which he was complimented by the tribe of courtiers. This drew from Prince Eugene the following wholesome admonitions: "La temerite ne passera pas pour bravour, vous ne devez pas les confonde car les connoisseur, ne s'y meprendront pas.

Yet we heard of no mark of distinction, no honorary promotions on the occasion; the efficacy of Brevets had not then been discovered, nor had it become necessary to cover the disgrace of the cabinet, by raising up idols for the adoration of the people; but if the executive could for a moment have forgotten that Gen. Van Rensselaer was a federalist, and opposed to Gov. Tompkins as a candidate for the government of the State of New-York, his reluctance to render common justice to the principal actors in this gallant scene, would have been counteracted by the self-evident policy of exhibiting it to the country in its true light—by contrasting it with the melancholy tale of Detroit, thus dissipating the gloom that hung over the soldiery and the country, and shewing them what deeds Americans were capable of performing. It is true complete success did not ultimately crown this enterprize; but two great ends were obtained for the country—It re-established the character of the American Army, and deprived the enemy by the death of Gen. Brock, of the best officer that has headed their troops in Canada throughout the war, and with his loss put an end to their then brilliant career.

I proceed to discharge a pleasing office by stating that the officers who accompanied Col. Van Rensselaer, were Major of Brigade, Lush of the militia, Lieuts. Randolph and Gansevoort, volunteers from the light artillery; Lieut. Rathbone of the heavy artillery; Capts. Malcolm, Wool, Armstrong, Ogilvie, and Lieuts. Kearney, Sammons, Carr, and Hugonin, and Ensign Morris of the 13th Infantry of whom two were killed and four wounded. The conspicuous gallantry of Lieut. Randolph *attracted the attention of the enemy*, and excited the admiration of his brethren in arms.

Things turned out exactly as Gen. Van Rensselaer had anticipated; Gen. Sheaffe, who succeeded to the command, on finding that the force at Queenstown had been routed and Gen. Brock killed, stripped Fort George of its garrison, and leaving it in charge of the ordinary guard, marched against

the invaders; and if a great part of the militia had not violated their promise, and abandoned their duty he might have been crushed in fifteen minutes, and the peninsula would have fallen into our hands. In this state of things an experienced officer, on seeing Sheaffe advance and file off from the direct route towards St. Davids by (q,qq*) in order to avoid a conflict in ascending the mountain, would have met him at that point where he could have been repulsed with half numbers; or having made the previous arrangement with his officers for the coup as soon as Sheaffe had reached St. Davids, he would have precipitated himself upon Fort George by the direct road and leaving the enemy four or five miles in his rear could have taken the place before they could have succoured it, and turned their own guns upon them. A single reflection would have justified the attempt—without retreat, the American detachment could not avoid an action, and by the abandonment of the militia were exposed to defeat, from which the capture of Fort George alone could save them. If they had failed in the attempt their misfortunes would not have been increased; but the chance was in their favour.—They might gain much, and could lose little. By some persons, Gen. Van Rensselaer was censured for his conduct on this occasion; but this was more the effect of party animosity, than any just ground of condemnation. In entering upon his command when a rival of the Governor of the state for a succession to the government, he evinced his disinterested patriotism, and exposed himself to great hazard in point of reputation; for it is a fair presumption, that it was not Gov. Tompkins' intention by the selection to strengthen the interests of his opponent, as this gentleman, with a thousand amiable and generous qualities, could not be expected to commit political suicide. Advocate as I am for the yeomanry of my country, I can find no excuse for the conduct of the militia on that occasion. By imperiously de-

* See Map.

manding the attack on Queenstown, they virtually pledged themselves to support it. The attack was made, but their pledge remained unredeemed; it is in vain that we search for the cause.

The army on the Straits of Niagara could have been assembled for offence only: therefore, Gen. Van Rensselaer, in making the attack, fulfilled the obligations of duty, and the views of government. The adjoining return,* taken from the official documents, will show that his force was more than sufficient for the occasion; and if blameable at all, it was in yielding to the alternative presented to him by his fellow-citizens and fellow-soldiers, before his preparations satisfied his own judgment; yet under the actual circumstances of the operation, as far as they have reached my knowledge, if the militia had been faithful to their engagements, and true to themselves, the whole might have passed the straits before the arrival of the British column under General Sheaffe, whom they might have cut off from Fort George, and captured or destroyed, after which the surrender of the Fort would have become a matter of form.

* Return of the troops under the command of Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer of the New-York Militia, Head-Quarters, Lewiston, October 12th, 1812.

Brigades.	Where stationed.	Total present for duty.	Remarks.
Brig. Gen. Miller's,	Lewiston,	588	Militia.
Lt. Col. Jno R. Fenwick's,	Lewiston,	550	Regulars.
Lt. Col. P. Swift's, and Lt. Col. S. Hopkins's,	Bl'k Rock & Buffalo,	386	Militia.
Brig. Gen. Wadsworth's,	Lewiston,	1682	Militia.
Brig Gen. Smyth's,	Black Rock,	1650	Regulars.
Lt. Col. Christie's,	Lewiston,	350	Regulars.

N. B. Having omitted in its proper place, I will here particularize, that it was the grenadier and light companies of the 49th regiment, which opposed Col. Van Rensselaer's landing: they were 175 strong, commanded by Capts. Dennie and Williams, who were both wounded, and had three sergeants and thirty-nine rank and file killed and wounded. This was from an official return taken at York.

APPENDIX, No. II.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to his Excellency Governor Tompkins.

Ogdensburgh, July 23d, 1812, 8 o'clock, P. M.

Sir,—

On receiving information that Sackett's Harbour was menaced by the enemy, I deemed it expedient that General Brown should repair there; and, accordingly, he departed from this place early yesterday morning. One reason for my remaining a day or two longer at this post was, to await, and possibly improve the success which might attend a projected attack upon a ten-gun British schooner which has for several days been lying at the dock in Prescott, opposite to this place. The proposed attack was concerted by my aid-de-camp, Col. Van Rensselaer, and Col. Benedict who commands at this post. Yesterday was spent in preparations. The boarding-boats were ready at 1 o'clock, last night, and the attack was to have been made by land and water, at 3 in the morning. But when every thing was prepared in such manner as to promise complete success, it was discovered with infinite chagrin and mortification, that only *sixty-six* men would volunteer for the service! This number being by no means competent, Cols. Van Rensselaer and Benedict, who would certainly have led the men to action with the most cool and determined bravery, were compelled to abandon an enterprize honourable in itself, and upon the result of which might have depended the whole command of the Lake and river.

This promising project having been blasted, and as nothing further of consequence appeared to demand my longer stay here, I was on the eve of my departure at five o'clock

this afternoon, when a large armed ship was discovered coming down the river. She has anchored close on shore, on the opposite side of the river, near to the schooner, and appears to be a fourteen-gun ship. Considerable solicitude prevails in this place. It is generally believed that the vessels in the harbour are the object of the enemy. The owners of the vessels are preparing to scuttle them, or remove them as far out of the reach of the enemy as may be. The troops are busy constructing a fort of timber north of Parish's store, on the best ground for the purpose. But, sir, our very great misfortune is, that we have only *two six-pounders*. If this harbour is to be protected, it is absolutely necessary that I should be immediately furnished with cannon of competent calibre, for the probably approaching emergency. I shall wait your answer by the return of the express, and govern myself accordingly.

I have the honour, &c.

His Excellency Gov. Tompkins.

From Major General Dearborn to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head Quarters, Greenbush, July 29th, 1812.

Major General Van Rensselaer,

Sir,—

Your situation, I presume, will enable you to ascertain what force the enemy can bring into action against offensive operations on our part at Kingston and its vicinity; and what forces, in addition to those under your command, would be necessary to render offensive operations in that quarter sufficiently sure of success. Any information you can give me on this, and all other points in relation to your command, and on the general state of things with you, and in Upper Canada, is requested; and it is highly desirable that you afford me the earliest information, from time to time, of any occurrences in your vicinity sufficiently important to be communicated. You will readily perceive the expediency of employing suitable characters for obtaining and

communicating to you correct information in relation to the enemy's force, and the disposition of the militia, and inhabitants generally in the Province.

Proper encouragement should be given to such persons as you may confide in, for their services in this employment; and I shall hold myself accountable for any necessary expenditures attendant on it. I have not had an opportunity of conferring with Governor Tompkins; but as he is shortly expected home, I shall soon have the pleasure of a conference in relation to your command, and the situation of the frontier generally. Not being informed of the extent of your command, I have written to the commanding officers at Niagara and Plattsburgh, from the presumption that there might be three distinct commands; but if I am mistaken, I trust no material inconvenience will result from it. Be assured, sir, that your appointment to your present command, your ready acceptance of it, and promptitude in repairing to the frontiers, affords high satisfaction to our good citizens, and is peculiarly gratifying to your very, &c.

From Major General Dearborn to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Greenbush, Aug. 3d, 1812.

Major Gen. Van Rensselaer, or the Comm'g Officer at Fort Niagara.

Sir.—

You will please take measures for keeping up a correspondence with Gen. Hull, and ascertain his movements by express, or otherwise; and as he has crossed over to Upper Canada, and taken possession of Fort Malden, it will be expedient to make every exertion in your power to co-operate with him. If your force will not admit of any strong offensive operations, it is highly desirable that such diversions should be made in his favour, as will prevent the enemy from detaching any force from the vicinity of Niagara to oppose the movements of Gen. Hull. I trust you will soon be called to act in a more decisive manner.

I am, &c.

From Major General Van Rensselaer, to His Excellency Governor Tompkins.

Buffalo, August 11th, 1812.

Sir,—

I have to advise your Excellency that I arrived here last evening, and various considerations induced me to adopt measures for obtaining the most satisfactory information respecting the situation of General Hull. Accordingly, I this morning sent my aid-de-camp to Black Rock, having heard that Judge Porter, brother of the Quarter Master General, had lately returned from Detroit. Col. Van Rensselaer has returned, having had a conference with the Quarter Master General, and Judge Porter. The amount of information obtained is substantially this.—That Judge Porter, left Detroit, on the 29th ult. General Hull, was entrenching himself opposite to Detroit;—Fort Malden was not taken as has been reported;—General Hull's force was eight hundred. At Brown's Town, below Detroit are fifteen hundred hostile Indians. Quarter Master General Porter has lately sent several boats with provisions for General Hull; but unfortunately, one boat has been taken by the enemy, and unfavourable apprehensions are entertained for the other boats. It is here, generally believed that detachments of troops have been sent from Fort George, to relieve Fort Malden; the number remaining behind, I have not been able to ascertain, but shall endeavour to make this an object of early inquiry. It is said that the enemy abound on the opposite shore, with ordnance, and every munition of war. We are, here, as indeed at all of our posts, lamentably deficient in ordnance. The situation of Ogdensburgh, and the necessity of supplying it with heavy ordnance, I have before stated to your Excellency in my letter by express from that place. Every consideration connected with the success of any operations in this quarter, urges me to solicit the earliest possible supply of heavy ordnance, and some skilful engineers, and artillerists. Without such aid and supplies, I

can hardly conceive how it will be possible for us to achieve any thing of importance, or even defend our posts in case of attacks from the enemy. I shall, to-morrow, proceed on to Black Rock and Lewiston, and make further communications of every incident of moment.

I have spent a part of this day with Red Jacket, Corn Planter, and a number of other Indians of influence. They very kindly consider me as the messenger of peace and friendship, specially delegated by your excellency. Their professions are unreservedly friendly, and I believe sincere.

I have this day received a letter from Major General Dearborn, in which he speaks of Fort Malden as being taken: I have given him such information on the subject as I have here obtained.

I have the honour, &c.

From Major General Dearborn to Major General Hall; or Commanding officer, &c.

Head Quarters, Green Bush, Aug. 8, 1812.

Major General Hall,

Sir,—

Having received from Sir Geo. Provost, Governor and Commander in Chief of the forces in Canada, by Col. Baynes, his Adjutant General, despatches from England, to our government, of a conciliatory nature; and a proposition on the part of Sir George Provost, for a mutual cessation of hostilities on the Frontiers, I have so far complied with the proposition, as to agree to direct the respective Commanding Officers on the side of the United States, to confine their respective operations to defensive measures until they receive further orders. Similar orders are given to the British Commanders. You will, therefore, confine the operations of the troops under your command to defensive measures until you receive further orders. It being explicitly understood, that if General Hull should continue to act offensively, and any movement of the enemy's troops in your vicinity should

take place with a view to offensive operations, it will be considered as an infraction of this agreement and you will govern yourself accordingly.

I am, sir, &c.

From Sam. S. Conner, A. D. to Gen. Dearborn, to the commanding officer at Niagara.

Sir,—

You will please to communicate the enclosed communication which is from the British Adjutant General, to the British commanding officer, opposite Niagara and Detroit, that he may immediately communicate it to Col. Proctor.

Yours, &c.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Dearborn.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 18 August, 1812, 6 o'clock, A. M.

Sir,—

Your letter of the 8th inst., by some mismanagement passed this place in the mail, last evening, on to Niagara, and was sent to me by express from Capt. Leonard at a late hour in the night. I have written General Hull inclosing your letter to him. I have also written General Porter to forward the despatch to General Hull immediately, by some very trusty express. I have written the commanding officer at Fort George enclosing the letters from Adjutant General Baynes to him, and sent my aid-de-camp, Col. Van Rensselaer, to Niagara, with orders to pass over with a Flag and deliver the letters.

I have the honour, &c.

Major General Dearborn.

From Major Gen. Van Rensselaer to Lieut. Col. Myers, 70th Regt.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 18th Aug., 1812.

Sir,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, by your flag of truce.

When I this morning transmitted to you the two letters

from the Adjutant General of the British army, I authorized Col. Van Rensselaer my Aid-de-camp, to make with you the necessary arrangements in relation to the armistice agreed on at Albany.

In your absence from Fort George, the letters were left without accomplishing the object. But I am now ready to send an officer to Fort Niagara, there to meet one whom you may appoint to make such arrangements for the government of the troops on the lines, as may be proper. In the mean time, it is explicitly understood that any movements of your troops in this vicinity, with a view to act offensively against Gen Hull will be considered an infraction of the armistice agreed upon between Gen. Dearborn and the British Adjutant General.

I have the honour, &c.

Lieut. Col. Myers.

Col. Myers, 70th Regt. D. Q. Master Gen. commanding the Niagara District, to Maj. Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Chippewa, 18th Aug., 1812.

Sir,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, transmitting one from the Adjutant General of the British army, addressed to Major Gen. Brock or officer commanding Fort George—relative to refraining from all offensive warfare between the troops of his Majesty the king of Great Britain, and the army of the United States of America, until further orders: and taking it for granted, that similar directions have been received by you from Gen. Dearborn, I shall strictly conform to those which have just reached me upon the subject: and should you deem any further explanation upon the terms of this armistice requisite, I will receive such officer as you may be pleased to send to Fort George for the purpose—my duty, however, will not allow of my being there before Thursday; but from which I trust no inconvenience will arise.

I have the honour, &c.

Major Gen. Van Rensselaer, &c. &c., Lewiston.

From Major Gen. Sheaffe, to Major Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Fort George, 19th Aug., 1812.

Sir,—

Having arrived at this Post to assume the command of his Majesty's troops stationed in the Niagara district, I have the honour to acquaint you that I shall be happy to receive, as speedily as possible, the officer suggested by Lieut. Col. Myers to be sent over, if it meet with your concurrence, or should you prefer it, Brigadier Major Evans, the bearer of this will communicate my sentiments, and arrange with you the mode of carrying into effect, the order for a cessation of hostilities betwixt the forces of our respective countries, stationed on the line along the Niagara Frontier.

I have the honour, &c.

(*Signed*) R. H. SHEAFFE,
Major General, &c.

Major Gen. Van Rensselaer or Officer commanding United States forces, Niagara District of New-York.

From Major Gen. Sheaffe to Major Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Queenstown, 20th Aug., 1812.

Sir,—

Brigade Major Evans is directed to repair again to your head-quarters, charged with propositions connected with the armistice, and which I hope will prove perfectly satisfactory to you.

I have the honour, &c.

(*Signed*) R. H. S. Maj. Gen. commanding
H. B. M. Troops,
Niagara Frontier.

Major Gen. Van Rensselaer.

From Major Gen. Van Rensselaer to his excellency Gov. Tompkins.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, Aug. 19th, 1812.

Sir,—

After having visited Buffalo, Black Rock, the Camps at Niagara Falls, and this place, and having by inspection

and other means of information satisfied myself of the efficient force, the state of discipline among the troops, the munitions of war at command; the strength, number, and condition of the enemy I should probably have to engage, and all other circumstances connected with my intended operations, I was perfectly satisfied that although some very imperious considerations urged an immediate descent upon Canada, yet that such descent with my present disposable force, would be rashness in the extreme. From Buffalo to Niagara, my force of militia, is less than one thousand; without any ordnance heavier than six pounders, and but few of them: without artillerists to use the few pieces I have, and the troops in a very indifferent state of discipline; finding myself in this truly unpleasant situation, I saw but one course to pursue which was to concentrate the troops scattered on this line, perfect their discipline as fast as possible, and order in such further detachments as might ensure success in my proposed operations. Accordingly, on the 15th inst. I issued my order to Lieut. Col. Fenwick at Oswego, to detach and march to this place Major Moseley's battalion of riflemen; on the 16th an order to Major Septimus Evans, of Lieut. Col. George D. Wickham's regiment of detached cavalry, for a troop of horse from his squadron:—to Lieut. Col. Henry Bloom of the 19th regiment of the 7th brigade of detached militia to march his whole command: with this additional force, and such other as I had reason to believe was on the march to this neighbourhood, and as might be called out at short notice, from this and Ontario county, I concluded that the plan which I had adopted might be attempted, unless the enemy on the opposite shore should be strongly reinforced. With the view of these intended operations, I had, on the 15th inst. written to the Quarter-master General to put immediately in readiness all the boats at his command —such was the arrangement of the troops on this line, and such my orders issued, when, in the night of the 17th I received by express from Capt. Leonard at Niagara, a letter

from Major Gen. Dearborn, informing me of the agreement he had entered into with the Governor General of Canada, through his Adjutant General, for an armistice. By this arrangement, thus communicated to me, which I presume has been done with your Excellency's approbation and consent, I am instructed to confine the troops under my command to *defensive* measures only, until further orders; and I have issued my general orders accordingly. The inclosures from the Adjutant General of the British army in Canada, which I received from General Dearborn, I sent, yesterday morning, by my aid-de-camp Col. Van Rensselaer, with a flag to Lieut. Col. Myers commanding at Fort George; at the same time, authorizing Col. Van Rensselaer to enter with Col. Myers into a definite arrangement for the government of the troops on both sides of the lines. Col. Myers was absent; but in the afternoon of yesterday I received by flag, a letter from him acknowledging the receipt of the letters which had been transmitted to him, with his pledge to conform strictly to the terms of the armistice and his proposition that I should, on Thursday next, send an officer to Fort George, to meet one whom he will appoint, for the purpose of settling definitely the terms of an arrangement for the government of the troops:—To which I have replied by flag, that I am now ready to send an officer to meet such one as he may appoint for the above purpose, but to meet at *Niagara*, as I consider that place, under existing circumstances, the most proper. I have no reason to doubt but this arrangement, will in two or three days be made, in good faith.

His Excellency Gov. Tompkins.

From Major General Van Rensselaer, to Major General Sheaffe.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 20th August, 1812.

Sir,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, covering the articles which you propose, for carrying the Armistice into effect. I have to regret that

the articles proposed, are so variant from the orders which I have received that I cannot accede to them.

In the letter which I had the honour to transmit to Lieut. Col. Myers, on the 18th instant, it was explicitly stated, that any movements of the troops in this vicinity with a view to act offensively against General Hull, would be considered an infraction of the Armistice. If an article, fully embracing the above is inadmissible, any further attempts for an adjustment, will be unavailing.

I have, &c.

We, the undersigned, in conformity with the instructions of our respective Commanders, hereby agree to a cessation of all acts of hostility between the troops and vessels of all descriptions under our command, until we shall receive further orders: and the party who shall first receive orders for the renewal of hostilities, shall give four days' notice, computing twenty-four hours to each day, before any offensive operation shall take place.

And we further agree, that no reinforcements of men, or supplies of ammunition shall be sent, by either party, higher up than Fort Erie; and it is also to be understood, that no reinforcements of men, no supplies of ammunition which now are, or hereafter may arrive in our respective districts shall be forwarded above that Post. And further, that no troops are to be sent up from any stations in either of our districts above Fort Erie, without four days' previous notice to be be given by the party intending to make such movements: Subject, however, to the above restrictions, *either party shall be at liberty to make such changes and movements of troops, vessels, and boats as he may deem proper.*

Agreed to this twenty-first of August, in the year one thousand eight hundred and twelve.

(*Signed*) S. Van Rensselaer,
Major General, commanding Frontiers, New-York.

R. H. Sheaffe,
Major General, commanding Fort George and Dependencies.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Dearborn.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, August 21, 1812.

Sir,—

Inclosed I transmit you a copy of an agreement, this day entered into between Major General Sheaffe, commanding Fort George and Dependencies, &c. &c. and myself, for the government of the forces on each side the line. You will readily perceive, that terms more favourable than those expected in your letter, have been obtained. The agreement speaks for itself.

Major General Dearborn.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Sheaffe.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 25th August, 1812.

Sir,—

I have learnt, with regret, that last night a subaltern officer with a few soldiers and citizens, contrary to my orders, passed over from the American shore, and on Buckhorn Island, surprized and brought off a sergeant and five men, with a boat. Early this morning, I ordered the sergeant and men released, and the boat restored to them.

I have the honour, &c.

Major General Sheaffe, Commanding, &c.

Major General Isaac Brock to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head Quarters, Fort George, 25th August, 1812.

Sir,—

Major General Sheaffe having communicated to me your letter of this date, addressed to him, I seize upon the first moment to express my thanks for the measures you have adopted to prevent the possibility of any misunderstanding which might have arisen in consequence of the unauthorized act of one of your subaltern officers.

It was not until my arrival at Fort Erie, late in the evening of the 23d instant that I learnt that a cessation of hostilities had been agreed upon, between General Dearborn and

Sir George Provost; and I, in consequence, despatched early yesterday morning, an express to Amherstburgh, ordering a cessation of all offensive operations against the United States, in that quarter; and likewise to exert every influence in restraining the Indians from committing any acts of hostility.

The fortune of war having put me in possession of Detroit and its dependencies, a small garrison has been ordered to occupy the Fort, the chief object of which was to afford protection to the inhabitants of the Territory. I have the honour to enclose a copy of a Proclamation which I issued upon this occasion.

I have the honour, &c.

Major General Van Rensselaer, commanding Lewiston.

From Major General Van Rensselaer, to Major General Dearborn.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 26th August, 1812.

Sir,--

I have the honour to enclose you a copy of a Proclamation, which I this day received from Major General Brock, under cover of his letter of this date to me; a copy of which letter, I also transmit to you. My letter to Major General Sheaffe, of which mention is made, was to disavow an imprudent act of a subaltern officer, who, with a few soldiers and citizens, passed over, since the Armistice, to Buckhorn Island, and there surprised a sergeant and five men, of the enemy, and brought them off, together with their boat, which men I ordered to be immediately released and the boat restored.

The surrender of General Hull's army excites a great deal of alarm in this vicinity. I shall, however, as far as in my power, check and keep it under.

I have, &c.

Major General Dearborn.

MAJOR GENERAL BROCK'S PROCLAMATION.

Proclamation by *Isaac Brock, Esq.*, Major General commanding his Majesty's forces in the Province of Upper Canada, &c. &c.

Whereas the Territory of Michigan was this day by capitulation ceded to the arms of his Britannic Majesty, without any other condition than the protection of private property; and wishing to give an early proof of the moderation and justice of the government, I do hereby announce to all the inhabitants of the said Territory, that the laws heretofore in existence shall continue in force until his Majesty's pleasure be known; or so long as the peace and safety of the said Territory will admit thereof; and I do hereby also declare and make known to the said inhabitants, that they shall be protected in the full exercise and enjoyment of their religion: of which all persons, both civil and military will take notice, and govern themselves accordingly.

All persons having in their possession, or having knowledge of any public property, shall forthwith deliver in the same, or give notice thereof to the officer commanding, or Lt. Col. Nichol, who are hereby authorized to receive and give proper receipts for the same. Officers of militia will be held responsible that all arms in possession of militiamen, be immediately delivered up; and all individuals whatever, who have in their possession arms of any kind, will deliver them up without delay.

Given under my hand at Detroit, this sixteenth day of August, 1812, and in the fifty-second year of his Majesty's reign.

(*Signed*) ISAAC BROCK, Major General.

A true copy.

J. MAC DONELL, Lt. Col. Militia, P. A. D. C.

From Major General Dearborn to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Greenbush, August 21, 1812.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

Sir,—

Your letter of the 12th inst. has been duly received. As it is believed that a detachment has been made from Niagara, to reinforce the garrison at Malden, it will be necessary to be as well prepared as possible to take advantage of the reduced forces in your front: and, as soon as there shall be orders to act offensively; considerable reinforcements from the detached militia, and volunteers, are ordered to Niagara, Sackett's Harbour, Ogdensburgh, and Plattsburgh. With the detachment of regular troops under Lieut. Col. Fenwick, there is some heavy ordnance, ammunition, and intrenching tools, which will be immediately, with additional ordnance and military stores, sent to Niagara, Sackett's Harbour, and Ogdensburgh. I have, also, ordered a considerable number of batteaux from Schenectady to Niagara and Sackett's Harbour, and the construction of suitable scows at the respective places, including Ogdensburgh, for the transportation of ordnance. I hope that Col. Porter will proceed in the construction of boats and scows, with all possible despatch. It will be highly gratifying to me to receive intelligence from you by every mail, and, in case of emergency, by express.

With much consideration, &c.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to his Excellency Governor Tompkins.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, August 31, 1812.

Sir,—

Presuming that the surrender of General Hull's army has been officially announced to your Excellency through the proper channel, I shall not enter into any details upon the event so disastrous to our country: its consequence must be felt every where; but they are peculiarly distressing upon

these frontiers, both to the citizens, and the little army under my command. Alarm pervades the country, and distrust among the troops. They are incessantly pressing for furloughs, under every possible pretence. Many are without shoes; all clamorous for pay. Many are sick. Swift's regiment at Black Rock are about one-fourth part down. I have ordered Doctor Brown to associate Doctor Chapin with him, and to examine as to the causes producing the diseases, the mode of treating them, &c. and to report to me their opinion of the best mode of restoring the sick, and preserving the health of those who remain well. This duty they are now performing.

Captain Jennings has been tried by a court-martial, and found guilty of such charges as forfeited his commission; and I have approved the sentence. The proceedings, in form, will soon be forwarded to your Excellency.

While we are thus growing daily weaker, our enemy is growing stronger. They hold a very commanding position on the high ground above Queenstown, and they are daily strengthening themselves in it, with men and ordnance. Indeed, they are fortifying almost every prominent point, from Fort Erie, to Fort George. At present we rest upon the armistice; but should hostilities be recommenced, I must immediately change my position. I receive no reinforcements of men, no ordnance, or munitions of war. I must hope, that I shall not long be left in this situation.

Two gentlemen, Messrs Johnson and Bascom, came over in a flag to the garrison, at Niagara, and the first I knew of them they were in my camp. Being satisfied that they were American citizens, men of intelligence, and some standing in society, I permitted them to pass on, with orders to report themselves to your Excellency.

There is one fact, which though not immediately connected with my department, I cannot refrain from mentioning;—the unfortunate soldiers of General Hull's army, who marched by my camp on their way to Lower Canada, are

very destitute of clothing. Every consideration would urge that some attention should be paid to their condition.

I have the honour, &c.

His Excellency Governor Tompkins.

From Major General Dearborn to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Greenbush, Aug. 25, 1812.

Sir,--

As soon as practicable after the receipt of this, you will please to have the enclosed letter directed to the Commanding Officer of the British forces at Fort George, at Niagara, conveyed to him by a flag; and the letter directed to Gen. Hull, you will please to have forwarded to him by express, with as great despatch as practicable; and at the expiration of four days after the letter is delivered to the British Commanding Officer at Fort George, you will consider the temporary conditional agreement for suspending offensive operations between the forces under your command, and the British forces in your vicinity, as no longer binding on either side; *and you will act accordingly; and you will make every exertion in your power for annoying the enemy, as well as to guard against any attack from him. Considerable reinforcements have been sent on from Montreal to strengthen their positions in Upper Canada; and I trust you will very soon receive such additional force from this State, and from Pennsylvania, as will enable you to pass into Canada with safety and effect.* A large reinforcement is on its march under Brig. Gen. Dodge, for Sackett's Harbour and Ogdensburgh, as well as for Plattsburgh. I have ordered thirty batteaux to Niagara, and an equal number to Sackett's Harbour, and have directed the building of proper scows for the transportation of ordnance. *If the enemy should have detached from Fort George, it may afford you an opportunity to strike a blow.*

I have the honour, &c.

P. S. Sir, it will be advisable to wait until the arrival of

Lt. Col. Fenwick with the cannon, and stores shall be rendered certain, within four days, before you send the enclosed letter to Fort George. I presume he must arrive before this reaches you; but it may be otherwise.

(*Signed*) H. DEARBORN.

Major Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Dearborn.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 1st September, 1812.

Sir,—

I have just received your letter of the 25th ult. I shall ascertain the movements and situation of Lieut. Col. Fenwick, with the cannon and stores; and as soon as he can be considered safe, I shall terminate the armistice in the manner prescribed.

Upon this occasion, I conceive it a duty I owe to my country, to the troops under my command, and to my own character, to state, that we are not, on this Frontier, in that condition which the approaching crisis will require. My force of militia, rank and file, now fit for duty, is six hundred and ninety-one, as will appear by the inclosed return; these have to guard a line of thirty-six miles. My sick list is more than one hundred. Many of the men are without shoes, and all clamorous for pay. Besides, it is a fact that cannot be concealed, that the surrender of General Hull's army has spread great alarm among the inhabitants on this Frontier, and I every day perceive strong symptoms of distrust among the troops. They have seen their countrymen surrendered without a single effort, and marched, prisoners, before their eyes. They cannot comprehend it.

At this hour, I have received no reinforcements of men, no supplies of ordnance, tents, nor ammunition. There are not ten rounds per man, on the Niagara Frontier; nor have we lead to make cartridges. We are extremely deficient of medicine and Hospital stores; of lint and bandage cloth we have none, —nor any surgical instruments. Lieut. Col.

Swift's regiment, at Black Rock, and the troops in garrison at Niagara, have no tents to take the field; unless Bloom's regiment, and the troops with Lieut. Col. Fenwick have tents with them, they cannot be covered. This is a brief sketch of our condition. Our enemy are every moment on the alert; they hold a very commanding position on the high ground above Queenstown; and are daily strengthening it, with men and ordnance. Indeed, almost every point of any importance from Fort Erie to Fort George, is in some state of defence. At each Fort on the Lakes, their shipping is ready to act. The troops which had been detached from this quarter to act against General Hull, have returned and may now be concentrated at this point. Before the termination of the armistice, I must change my position, and can only act on the defensive, until I shall be reinforced with troops, well disciplined, and commanded by able officers.

I am, with respectful consideration, &c.

Major General Dearborn.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to His Excellency Governor Tompkins.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, September 1st, 1812.

Sir,—

In the letter, which I yesterday had the honour to address to your Excellency, I mentioned the general alarm which the surrender of General Hull's army had spread through the Frontiers.

The inhabitants every where think themselves in danger. This is particularly the case in the County of Chautauque; in consequence of representations made to me by the inhabitants of that county, I had on the 27th ult. issued an order to Lieut. Col. John Mc Mahon, to order into service two full companies of his regiment for the protection of the inhabitants. This morning again, I have been called upon by Captains Baldwin and Mack, gentlemen of respectability, from that county, very earnestly soliciting, in behalf of the

inhabitants, still further force for their protection, and I have issued another order to Lieut. Col. Mc Mahon, to detach one captain, two sergeants, two corporals, and twenty-six privates more, for the service aforesaid, until your Excellency's pleasure can be known on the subject.

September 2d, 4 o'clock, P. M.

Col. Fenwick has not yet arrived at Fort Niagara, and of course, I have not delivered the letter I yesterday received from Major General Dearborn, by express. Four or five vessels have just arrived at Fort George, it is supposed with reinforcements. Our enemies appear to be on the alert at every point.

This morning Lieut. Branch and about forty men arrived here, with two pieces of flying artillery; also, at the same time, Capt. Camp, with about twenty-five dragoons. The company lately under the command of Captain Jennings, in Lieut. Col. Swift's Regiment, had become so clamorous for pay, and contended so strenuously that their time had expired, that I have ordered them to be dismissed, in the opinion that this would meet your Excellency's approbation. I was strengthened by learning from Brigadier General Brown, that Lieut. Col. Bellinger's regiment, who were on the same standing in service, at Sackett's Harbour, have been discharged by your order.

I have the honour &c.

His Excellency Governor Tompkins.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 2d September, 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Sir,—

Major General Van Rensselaer directs that you land the troops, cannon, and stores, under your command, at the Four Mile Creek; and make every military preparation to protect them, and to give him immediate information of your arrival by express.

By order,

Sol. Van Rensselaer, Aid-de-camp.

Lieut. Col. Fenwick, Light Artillery.

Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick *to* Major General Van Rensselaer.

Four Mile Creek, September 3, 1812.

Sir,—

Agreeable to your instructions,* I am landing the ordnance and stores at this place. They are of great importance, and I do not think them safe in this position. The powder I must keep on board, as it will sustain injury by being taken out. I pray you, sir, to assist me so soon as possible, and receive the assurance of my consideration and respect.

(*Signed*) JOHN R. FENWICK,
Lieut. Col. Light Artillery.

Colonel Sol. Van Rensselaer to Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, September 3, 1812.

Sir,—

Major General Van Rensselaer has ordered the Quarter Master to proceed immediately to the Four Mile Creek, and furnish you with the necessary transportation for the cannon and military stores in your charge; and has also detached one captain, one subaltern, and forty men to assist you in their removal and protection to this place. The troops and wagons will reach you this evening.

I have the honour, &c.

(*Signed*) S. V. REN. A. D. C.

Lieut. Col. Fenwick, Four Mile Creek.

From Major Gen. Dearborn to Major Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Greenbush, 1st Sept., 1812.

Major Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer.

I received your letter of the 25th ult. this morning, enclosing a communication from Capt. Leonard.—The fall

* An express had been sent to Col. Fenwick, to land at Four Mile Creek. This precaution was taken lest the Armistice might have been terminated below, or some accident might throw the cargo into the hands of the enemy. No copy was kept of the note to Col. Fenwick.

of Gen. Hull, and the army under his command, is as mortifying as it was unexpected. We must endeavour to redeem our honour by increasing our exertions. In addition to the militia detachments ordered from this State, and two thousand ordered from the north-western part of Pennsylvania to Niagara; three regiments of new-raised troops of the army have been some days on their march towards your post. I am forwarding additional supplies of musketry and cannon, with forty batteaux to Niagara—a detachment of troops will accompany the boats from Oswego. It will be necessary to have teams ready to take the stores and boats from a safe landing place; and it may be well to order a detachment to meet the boats at some distance from Niagara on the shore. I hope Lieut. Col. Fenwick, with the troops and stores under his command, will have arrived in season. *I have no doubt but that you will improve the earliest opportunity for retaliating on the enemy our misfortunes at Detroit.* Gen. Dodge goes to Sackett's Harbour with a fine force. I have detached Gen. Bloomfield with a brigade of regular troops, with artillery, &c. to Plattsburgh, and other troops in addition to the militia of this State and Vermont will accompany or follow him.

I shall endeavour to draw the reinforcements back from Upper Canada to Montreal.

With great consideration and esteem.

From Major Gen. Van Rensselaer to Major Gen. Brock.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, Sept. 4th, 1812.

Sir,—

By the articles which I had the honour to conclude with Major Gen. Sheaffe on the 21st ult., for the government of the troops of the United States under my command, and his Brittannic Majesty's forces on this frontier, during the temporary armistice, it was, among other things, stipulated that "*the party who shall first receive orders for the renewal of hostilities shall give four days' notice, computing*

twenty-four hours to each day, before any offensive operation shall take place."

Having now received orders to terminate the armistice, in conformity to the above recited stipulation, I have the honour to transmit you this notice, that the armistice will be terminated at twelve o'clock, at noon, on Tuesday, the eighth day of September, inst.

I have the honour, &c.

Major Gen. Isaac Brock, or officer commanding Fort George.

From Major Gen. Sheaffe to Major Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Fort George, 5th Sept., 1812.

Sir,—

I have the honour of receiving your communication, signifying the intention on the part of the United States of renewing hostilities, after four days shall have elapsed from the period at which the notice was given. Thus declaring that the armistice shall terminate at twelve o'clock at noon, on the eighth day of this September.

I have the honour, &c.

(*Signed*) R. H. SHEAFFE,

Maj. Gen. H. B. M. forces, commanding, &c.

Major Gen. Van Rensselaer, commanding frontiers.

From Major Gen. Dearborn to Major Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Greenbush, Sept. 2d, 1812.

Major Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer,

Sir,—

I send this by express for the purpose of putting you on your guard against an attack, that I have reason to apprehend is intended by the enemy. A considerable force has lately passed into Upper Canada, for the obvious purpose of striking not only at Detroit, but at other posts. From the number of troops which have left Montreal for Upper Canada, I am not without fear that attempts will be speedily made, to reduce you and your forces to the mortifying situation of Gen. Hull and his army. If such an

attempt of the enemy should be made, previous to the arrival of the principal part of the troops destined to Niagara, it will be necessary for you to be prepared for all events; and *to be prepared to make good a secure retreat as the last resort.* I hope, however, you will not be reduced to the mortifying alternative of falling back. But from the unfortunate event at Detroit, we may expect great exertions on the part of the enemy; and as far as the means in our power will admit, we, I trust, shall be at least equally vigilant and active.

I am, sir, with high consideration and esteem, &c.

P. S. The Frigate Guerriere has been captured and sunk by the U. S. Frigate Constitution, Capt. Hull.

From Major Gen. Van Rensselaer to Major Gen. Dearborn.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 5th Sept., 1812.—7, P. M.

Sir,—

The express has just arrived with your letter of the 2d inst. I thank you for the information which your letter contains, and for suggesting precautions against a disaster, which would deeply implicate the honour of my country, the fate of the little army under my command, and my own character.

Every exertion which the small force I command can make, to avoid either a surprise or defeat, will be attempted. So small and scattered has been my little band, and so depressed by the fate of Gen. Hull, that every movement has been heavy. But within forty-eight hours, the scene seems to have changed a little for the better.—Lieut. Col. Fenwick has arrived safe, with the cannon and stores. To avoid any possible casualty, I ordered them landed at the Four Mile Creek, a little below Fort Niagara, and from thence they have been brought by land: the boats have returned. A battalion of about seventy riflemen, which on the 16th ult. I had ordered from Oswego, has this day arrived here.

I have determined, with the concurrence of Lieut. Col. Fenwick's opinion, to throw up a strong battery on this side of Fort Niagara, on the bank of the river, and there place the four eighteen pounders. With this view I went this morning on the spot, and we have broke ground. This evening Lieut. Col. Fenwick and Capt. Leonard are with me. I understand that our movement has produced great activity at Fort George. The enemy have immediately commenced some new works. It is my intention to support the battery near Fort Niagara, with as strong a camp as I am able, and to cut a road back of it for greater safety, in case I should be hard pressed.

Agreeably to your instructions I waited for the safety of Lieut. Col. Fenwick, the cannon, and stores, before I gave the notice necessary to terminate the armistice, conformably to the stipulations between Major Gen. Sheaffe and myself. The notice was delivered at Fort George yesterday before noon, and by it the armistice will be terminated at 12 o'clock at noon, on the 8th inst. This day Major Gen. Sheaffe has acknowledged the receipt of my notice. My present camp being within the reach of the enemy's guns, on the high grounds in Queenstown, I have determined to quit. I had designated a spot for my new encampment about one mile from the river, on the ridge road; but I may reconsider this subject. It might be expected, from my situation, that I could with facility obtain correct information of the enemy's force and movements in this vicinity; but so is not the fact. Every effort for that purpose is absolutely vain. I can only obtain information too general to calculate upon. It is generally believed that the enemy are concentrating their forces to this neighbourhood; but what their numbers are, is to me wholly unknown.—They appear to be on the alert.

At Fort Niagara we have (concealed) two thirteen and a half inch brass mortars, and four eight and a half inch howitzers. Capt. Leonard has this evening handed me a memorandum of articles that in his opinion, which I respect, are

very much wanted for these pieces, and some others, as follows:—

400 shells for the mortars.

1600 cannister and grape shot for the howitzers.

16 dozen port-fires—harness complete for the mortars and howitzers—also wanted, harness for the 6 six pounders now at Fort Niagara.

With the information of which you are possessed, relative to my force and that of the enemy, I presume you cannot expect that I shall, immediately, attempt to act offensively. I shall endeavour to watch the motions of the enemy as far as possible, and so dispose my little force as to avoid a surprise, or risking too much with raw troops in case the enemy should cross to attack me:—the surrender of Gen. Hull's army has put it in the power of the enemy to turn a strong force, to act either defensively or offensively against me. My situation requires arduous duty: it may be critical; but I shall meet events in that manner which my judgment shall dictate as most prudent and safe, and to the utmost of my power discharge my duty.

The conduct of Capt. Hull in the Constitution was gallant indeed, and has justified the high expectations we have all entertained of our navy, and the brave men who command it.

I have the honour to be, sir,
with respect and consideration, &c.

Major Gen. Dearborn.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Dearborn.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 8th Sept., 1812.

Sir,—

I have this day received your two letters of the 1st instant, and have made the communication you requested to the Contractor.

No occurrence of importance has taken place since I wrote you on the 5th, by your express. I have, yesterday,

removed my camp to the Ridge Road, as I proposed. The battery near Fort Niagara is fast progressing, also the cutting of the back road, mentioned in my last letter. *The enemy appear to be very active;* but whether their preparations are for offensive, or defensive operations, is impossible for me to determine.

The night before last two men came over from Canada, but the information they give is of very little consequence: indeed, the character of the men would not give much weight to any thing they might say. They state that Gen. Brock had returned from York to Fort George—that 1500 militia were ordered for Fort George yesterday—some troops have this day passed up through Queenstown. Not knowing what the termination of the armistice might produce, I have taken every precaution in my power to meet any attempt the enemy might make. But it is now five o'clock, and I neither see nor hear of any movements. General Wadsworth and Col. Van Rensselaer have been the whole day at Niagara. Should they return before the mail closes, and have any thing of importance to communicate, I shall add it in a postscript.

I am, sir, with great respect.

Major Gen. Dearborn.

Memorandum.—The following note was received on the 8th of September:—

Lt. Col. Fenwick to Maj. Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Sir,—

I am induced to believe from every observation I have vigilantly made, that the enemy is prepared and ready for an attack. They are so with shipping and boats, which today brought them a reinforcement of men and stores. Our patrole are very lax in their duty. The work erecting cannot be finished *in time*, without additional strength. When finished, it is not secure without being strongly covered in the rear; for we have nothing to prevent their landing;

and they can, in that case, carry the work. The regular force should be concentrated, and organized. Our stores should be removed; they are not in safety; for, if they threw over two hundred men, they can carry the Fort. This I beg your consideration to, as your strength is six miles off, and four hour's time. I have no means of express at my command.

JOHN R. FENWICK, Lt. Col. &c.

From Lt. Col. John R. Fenwick to Maj. Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Fort Niagara, Sept. 10th, 1812.

Sir,—

Fatigued and harassed as the troops have been, I really do not think our situation a safe one. I submit to your judgment whether the troops should not be concentrated: as they are all young and undisciplined, they may be cut up in detail. The defence of this place is precarious, outside of the store-house. I apprehend nothing but surprise! We should be then prepared to act in force, and in any given point. The Contractor is very inattentive. Our men are extremely dissatisfied. The enemy has erected another battery. I ordered the light artillery down. They called in their fatigue parties, and prepared for attack—the Indians moving in every direction. The movement puzzles them; and I am pleased at giving them so much trouble. I hope I shall have the honour of a visit from you to-morrow.

I salute you, General, with consideration and respect,

JOHN R. FENWICK, Lt. Col. Lt. Art.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

From Maj. Gen. Van Rensselaer to Maj. Gen. Dearborn.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 10th Sept., 1812.

Sir,—

When I had the honour of receiving your communication

of the 1st inst., acquainting me of the dispositions you are making to reinforce me upon this frontier with men, cannon, musketry, stores, etc., my attention was immediately arrested by the proposition of sending them from Oswego to Niagara, or, indeed, any part of that distance, by water. It will be recollected that the passage of Lt. Col. Fenwick with boats, was rendered safe, under a clause of the agreement for the observance of the armistice. But, upon the receipt of your letter, my own opinion was against risking any thing, hereafter, along that shore by water; but I wished further information on the subject before I should advise you. The opinions of others whom I have advised with on this subject, and who are competent judges, fully accord with my own, that it would be very hazardous for the batteaux to attempt coming from Oswego to Niagara in the very face of our active enemy, having command of the water. The batteaux might, and probably would, have some days of head wind; and, in such case, it would be next to impossible that they should escape the observation of the enemy: and, when once discovered, they would undoubtedly be attacked in some place where the landing could be effected with most difficulty. My opinion is further strengthened by some late movements of the enemy. The day after the termination of the armistice, the Royal George, and another armed vessel, chased some vessels returning from Niagara to Oswego, into the Genesee river, and fired a few shot. This has excited an alarm among the inhabitants; and, according to the custom prevailing on the whole frontier, they have sent a deputation to me praying protection. I have ordered them some ammunition; I can do no more. I am so entirely convinced that the cargoes of the batteaux will be in danger on the passage from Oswego to Niagara, that I shall send an express to Three River Point, to have the batteaux come up to Cayuga Bridge, and there land their cargoes, to be transported by

land to this place.* I shall bestow further consideration on this subject.

Believing that the best use which I can make of the old stone mess-house at Niagara, is to convert it into a battery, I have ordered the roof to be taken off, the walls above the upper floor to be strengthened by embankments of earth on the inner side, and two twelve-pounders, and one howitzer mounted in that battery. It is high, and may, perhaps, avail us something. I expect it will be prepared in this manner, in a day or two. I was yesterday there, and the roof was nearly taken down.

I have the honour to be, sir, with great consideration.

Major General Dearborn.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick, commanding Niagara.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 15th September, 1812.

Sir,—

I have this moment received your note of this date. It is a fact too true, that many of the arms both here, and at the garrison are not fit for use. The armourers are here, busily engaged; nevertheless I send you one of them. Please to order the line of sentries extended up the river as far as you deem expedient.

It seems to be impossible to obtain *grain* for our horses. I have this day issued an order to the Quarter Master General, as to forage; and shall make every effort in my power, to get a supply. General Brock will, undoubtedly, make every effort; let us employ every moment in making the best possible dispositions, to receive him, should he attempt an attack. As to the salt, the teams and men were left behind for the express purpose of removing it. If the service

* Perhaps some precautions may be adopted so as to get round the batteaux to the Eighteen-Mile Creek, or to some near position on the lake shore, from whence they may be drawn over land to this place.

requires any more men for fatigue I will send them immediately.

With consideration and respect.

Lieut. Col. Fenwick, Light Artillery commanding Niagara.

Major General Van Rensselaer to his Excellency Governor Tompkins.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 15th September, 1812.

Sir,—

Agreeably to the instructions contained in your Excellency's last letter of the 14th ult, I have endeavoured to keep Major General Dearborn fully advised of all my movements and operations, since that time, and to my letters transmitted to him, I beg leave to refer your Excellency for particulars. If the little army under my command has not yet achieved any thing brilliant, I endeavour to console myself with the belief, that we have not yet suffered any disgrace. My force is yet small—about sixteen hundred militia; of course the necessary service renders the duty of the troops very severe. They, however, endure it with as much patience, as could be expected from men in their situation. Many of them destitute of shoes, and indeed of such clothing as is necessary for the approaching season; and they are all extremely clamorous for their pay. Some money must be furnished for the troops in a very short time, or the consequences of omitting it will seriously affect the service, and at least render every movement heavy.

Since my first arrival on this frontier, I have found myself much embarrassed with the situation of Fort Niagara. To attempt defending it with the ordnance I found here, I considered idle: and after the return of General Brock from Detroit, I had great reason to believe that he could command a competent force to carry the garrison, should he attack it. But apprehending the very serious consequences which must inevitably result from abandoning the Fort altogether, I took the precaution of removing the most valuable stores,

and determined to risk events, until Lieut. Col. Fenwick should arrive, when I might avail myself of his opinion, at least, and of the ordnance he had with him, should it be deemed advisable to attempt holding the garrison. By suspending the notice for terminating the Armistice, Lieut. Col. Fenwick arrived safe with the cannon and stores, under his charge, at Four Mile Creek. Fort Niagara became one of the first subjects of deliberation, and it was determined to attempt maintaining it. For this purpose it was deemed expedient to remove the roof of the old stone mess-house, and convert the upper story into a battery, to be mounted with two twelve pounders, and a howitzer. I also determined to throw up a strong battery on the bank of the river about a mile above the garrison; nearly opposite the main battery on the Canada shore, and there mount three eighteen pounders.

As the enemy can rake the river-road, from this to the garrison, even with musketry, I determined to cut a road for communication between my camp and the garrison, back in the woods, and, cut off the reach of the enemy's fire; these have been the main objects of our fatigue for some days past, and are all of them nearly completed. These operations have produced great activity at Fort George; no sooner were our works commenced than the enemy began opposing batteries. Their force is certainly very respectable, and constantly employed. Whether the enemy will attack Niagara or not, is impossible for me to say. There are some very imperious considerations to urge them to it. Newark is a very considerable village; the enemy have there, valuable barracks and accommodations for winter quarters; and whatever might be the final result of a bombardment, the enemy must inevitably suffer very considerably. My present opinion is, that I had better attempt to maintain the garrison, than to risk the consequences of abandoning it.

Liable as I am to an attack from the enemy at any hour, and my troops worn down with fatigue, I have resorted to a measure which, perhaps, exceeds the letter of my orders;

yet considering that not only the tranquillity of this frontier, but possibly the fate of my little army may be at stake; and having been advised by Major General Dearborn to adopt every measuse of precaution, against a surprise from a strong force which he had reason to believe the enemy were directing against me; I have ordered a detachment of five hundred men from Brigadier General Hopkin's brigade, and some companies of the detachment have actually marched. I wish to be favoured with your excellency's early instructions on this subject; as at present I only consider these troops ordered into service during your pleasure.

From a source not to be doubted, I learn that the enemy are forwarding very large supplies of arms and military stores to Upper Canada: one hundred loaded boats have lately come up the St. Lawrence; also two regiments are on their way to Upper Canada.

Having been advised by Major General Dearborn that forty batteaux, with cargoes for the use of the army on this Frontier, were on their way from Schenectady to Niagara, by the way of Oswego, I have advised him of the danger to be apprehended in their voyage from Oswego to Niagara: as I am clearly of opinion from the best information, that that passage ought not to be attempted, by the boats *with their cargoes;* and fearing that my despatch might not reach Major General Dearborn in season for him to act, I have by express, ordered the commanding officer of the batteaux, to stop at Three River Point, come up to Cayuga Bridge—land, and store the cargoes—and then go down to Oswego, adopt every precaution to avoid capture, and proceed with all possible despatch, to the Eighteen Mile Creek. I have advised the Quarter Master of this arrangement, and he has deputed a person to receive the cargoes of the batteaux, and furnish the necessary transportation to Black Rock.

The alarm which lately took place in the County of Ontario, by the enemy's ships chasing some vessels into the mouth of the Genesee river, has induced Judge Atwater to

make a communication to me of a very unpleasant nature. After stating the great zeal with which the militia turned out, he says, "But, sir, I lament when I tell you, that neither arms, nor ammunition are provided for those brave men: no, not one musket to six men. that would cheerfully risk their lives, in defence of their country." He says, they "are destitute of arms and ammunition; they are neither of them to be purchased in the country."

I have the honour, &c.

His Excellency Governor Tompkins.

Extract of a letter from his Excellency Governor Tompkins to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Albany, September 9th, 1812.

Dear sir,—

Your various communications have come to hand, the two last while I was in New-York. My return from that city was expedited by the news of Hull's discomfiture. Previously to my leaving this place for New-York, I had ordered out two regiments, in addition to Bloom's, to reinforce you, but their march has been retarded by circumstances, over which I had no control. They are now directed to move on with the utmost expedition. Until reinforcements arrive I am sensible of the delicacy of your situation. Your proceedings hitherto, in concentrating in one place, and disciplining a large body of your troops, changing your encampments, your disposition of the despatch relative to the termination of the Armistice, and every other official act has met my entire approbation, and will receive that of your fellow-citizens generally. I pray God you may be able to maintain your post, until reinforcements shall arrive.

His Excellency Governor Tompkins to Major General Van Rensselaer. Extract from.

Albany, September 9th, 1812.

The government has at length been awakened to its

duty, with respect to the command of the Lakes. The most unbounded authority has been given to Captain Chauncy for that purpose, and he will be with you soon. Forty ship carpenters came up with me, in the last steamboat, and have gone on Westward. Marines and seamen, will be on as soon as vessels and gun-boats are ready.

A large supply of ordnance of every description, is now on its way from New-York. The orders embrace Erie as well as Ontario. I despatched an express for Captain Chauncy, on that subject from New-York, on Friday evening to Captain Woolsey. The despatches have returned this morning, and have gone down by express. Should you, my dear General, be able to maintain your position a short time, these arrangements for the Lakes, and the reinforcements, will place you in a situation of defiance. To enable you so to do more effectually, the militia of every description in the counties above mentioned are placed at your disposal, and you may instantly call upon all, or any portion of them, under the act of 1795, (enclosed) or under the militia law of this state, and I will approve, confirm, and maintain your proceedings. The Quarter Master General of the state is ordered by me into regular service, and is now, in every respect subject to your directions. I have remitted him ten thousand dollars, by Major Noon.

You have probably felt hurt at the unfrequency of my answers to your communications: but when I inform you that I have no private secretary here, that the adjutant general is in declining health, and that none of my staff or aids are in service, or with me, though the latter have volunteered their services without pay, and have been with me occasionally, at their own expense, and when I inform you further, that the drudgery of attending to a variety of details in rendezvousing, supplying equipage, and paying troops, &c. devolves upon me, or must remain unattended to, I trust you will extend great charity to my apparent inattention to your mmunications.

Receive, dear general, an assurance of my great consideration and sincere esteem.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

EXTRACT.

From Major General Dearborn to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Greenbush, Sept. 10th, 1812.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

Sir,—

Your letter of the 7th, by the returning express, reached us at 8 o'clock last evening. The safe arrival of Lieut. Col. Fenwick, with the troops, cannon, and stores, has relieved me from some anxiety. *I am satisfied that the abandonment of the Old Fort is a prudent measure*; and I have the fullest confidence that, whatever relates to your actual command, will be performed in the manner that the good of the service, and the best interests of the country demand.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to His Excellency Governor Tompkins.

EXTRACT FROM.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 2d Sept., 1812.

Sir,—

Since I had the honour to address your Excellency and General Dearborn, on the 17th inst.,* nothing of very great importance has taken place. The position of the army is still the same, guarding with great vigilance, as far as our force will admit, every point accessible by the enemy. On the night of the 20th, all the ships which the enemy have on Lake Ontario, were anchored in the mouth of Niagara River. What was the object of this movement, I know not, unless it was to avoid the violence of a most tremendous storm which we have lately had, in which our Troops have suffered much. By the great violence of the wind, many tents were blown over; my own marque, bed, and all, was completely deluged. My morning report of sick is 149. Colonel Van Rensselaer went, yesterday, to Fort George, to

* Both inserted in the narrative.

carry my answer to a communication I had received from General Brock, relative to a firing between our sentinels, by which one man on the Canada shore was killed. There was no General Officer at Fort George, yesterday; and the ships were all gone.

From Major General Dearborn to Major General Van Rensselaer.
Head-Quarters, Greenbush, Sept. 17th, 1812.

Dear Sir,—

Your letter of the 8th was this day received. I have ordered two regiments from this camp, and two companies of artillery for Niagara. When they arrive with the regular troops and militia, from the Southward, and such additional numbers of militia, as I reckon upon from this state, the aggregate force will, I presume, amount to upwards of six thousand. It is intended to have a force sufficient *to enable you to act with effect, although late.* Brigadier General Smith will leave this place to-morrow, to take command of his Brigade of regular troops, when they arrive. I persuade myself that you will not, under your present circumstances, risk more than prudence will justify; and that, of course, you will be prepared, *in case you are pushed, to fall back*, so as not to hazard an action on very unequal footing. If the enemy should make an attempt on you, his endeavour will undoubtedly be to cut off your retreat by light parties and Indians. You will excuse my repeated cautions; but from the best information I have received, I am induced to fear that an attempt will be made on your post before sufficient reinforcemnts will reach you. This will be conveyed by a safe hand, and in confidence.

Yours, with respect and esteem.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Maj. General Dearborn.
Head-Quarters, Lewiston, Sept. 27th, 1812.

Sir,—

By Captain Dox, who arrived in camp yesterday, I

received your letter of the 17th inst., and I can assure you, it is consoling to learn that I shall soon be partially relieved from that severe suspense and solicitude which have, for some weeks past, been inseparably connected with my situation. In the view of those important interests which I considered to be at stake, it required much deliberation, to decide on the proper course to be pursued, and when that course was determined, in the manner which I have before stated to you, it required new efforts, by night and day, to dispose my small force to meet events in such manner, as to justify the course adopted. But, as yet, I am satisfied of the correctness of the decision: and, although I have acquired nothing, I have surrendered nothing.

From the various accounts I have received, we must, I think, in a few days be able to act, at least, on the defensive, with better prospects.

Lieut. Colonel Boesler has arrived, and, by him, I learn that three regiments will soon arrive. But I am mortified to understand, by a letter from Col. Winder, that the aggregate of the troops will be but about 900 men, and that his regiment is entirely without cloth clothing, which is indispensable for them in the field at this season.

The enemy continue their operations with great activity fortifying their camp, at Fort George, in every direction. Seven of the 24 pounders taken, at Detroit, and there mounted, part on travelling carriages.

Notwithstanding the most positive orders on both sides, we are constantly troubled with the warfare of sentries. By their firings across the river, one man on each side has fallen, within the past week. It is next to impossible, to keep our guards sufficiently vigilant on their posts. I presume, His Excellency, Governor Tompkins, has shown you an extract of a letter which I lately forwarded him, relative to the strength of the enemy, in the rear of Fort Erie. Captain Gibson has arrived. I presume, Lieut Elliott of the navy has apprised you of his arrangements: the ves-

sels had escaped from Genesee River to Oswego. He is now, with fifteen of his men at Buffalo. More ordnance seems indispensable for our future operations.

P. S. As the post at Sackett's Harbour is within my command, I take the liberty of suggesting for your consideration the propriety of continuing so many troops—about sixteen hundred—there. While the enemy hold command of the Lake, Sackett's Harbour is not a point from which a descent upon Canada can be made. We are not to apprehend general invasion, at every point; and the village, at that place, is certainly not of importance in proportion to the force which guards it. I know of no consideration which ought to claim more than a regiment of troops at that Post, to man the battery, and guard the Harbour. In my opinion, every consideration, connected with the general interest of the service dictates, that part of the troops at Sacketts Harbour should be ordered immediately to this station.

I am, sir, with respect, &c.

Major General Dearborn.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Dearborn.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 28th Aug., 1812.

Sir,—

By the mail of this day I received your letter of the 21st inst. I had hoped that his excellency Gov. Tompkins might have detailed to you the condition of the troops under my command on this frontier; and also the ordnance, &c. at my command. The whole number of militia on this frontier is less than eight hundred; more than one hundred on the sick list: many without shoes, and otherwise illy prepared for offensive operations. I have only five or six pieces of ordnance: none larger than six pounders.

After having satisfied myself of the strength and condition of the enemy, I was fully convinced that however imperious the considerations which urged an immediate descent

upon Canada, that the result must be unfavourable. I therefore adopted the plan of concentrating my forces scattered on this line, and calling in such further reinforcements as might enable me to act. But the face of things is now wholly changed by the incomprehensible disaster of Gen. Hull's army. Within forty-eight hours past Gen. Hull, and a considerable portion of his regulars, have been marched through Queenstown, in fair view of my camp. The effects produced by this event are such as you will readily imagine. I understand that Gen. Hull and his troops are now embarking at Fort George, probably for Montreal.

I wait with solicitude to learn the result of our Government's deliberation on the armistice; in the mean time, adopting such measures as I must pursue, if a recommencement of hostilities shall take place.

I shall immediately apprise Gen. Porter of your instructions respecting boats.

I have the honour, &c.

Major Gen. Dearborn.

From Major General Dearborn to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Greenbush, Sept. 26th, 1812.

Major General Van Rensselaer,

Sir,—

Your letter of the 17th inst. was not received until this morning. Although I had taken as early measures as circumstances admitted of, for having your post strongly reinforced, I have been disappointed as to the time of the actual arrival of the different corps at their places of destination; and also in regard to the transportation of military stores to your camp. A strange fatality seems to have pervaded the whole arrangements. Ample reinforcements of troops and supplies of stores are on their way, but I fear their arrival will be too late to enable you to maintain your position. I had hoped from your former letter, that the old fort had been abandoned, and the stores removed to a place

of more security. I fear it will, in case of an attack from a superior force, be *a trap for the garrison that may be placed in it.* If this should reach you previous to the enemy's movement against you, I must take the liberty of advising to such a concentration of your force, and such arrangements for the safety of the principal military stores, boats, &c., as will enable you, in the last resort, to risk no more than shall be absolutely necessary. I have requested the Quarter Master General to send on a deputy quartermaster with funds, and capacity for furnishing whatever may be necessary in his line. *By putting on the best face that your situation admits, the enemy may be induced to delay an attack until you will be able to meet him, and carry the war into Canada. At all events, we must calculate on possessing Upper Canada before winter sets in.* Gen. Harrison will, I am assured, enter Canada, by Detroit, with not less than from six to seven thousand men, exclusive of the troops necessary for guarding the frontier against Indian depredations. The force at Sackett's Harbour, and that vicinity, is over two thousand, including an old company of regular artillery, and a large company of old riflemen. I have great confidence in the exertions now in operation in the navy department on Lake Ontario. In fact, we have nothing to fear, and much to hope as to the ultimate success of measures now in operation with a view to Upper Canada; but much may immediately depend on what may happen at your post.

Your's with high respect and consideration.

Lieut. Totten, of the Engineers, to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Fort Niagara, October 5th, 1812.

Sir,—

I beg leave to lay before you the following few observations on the works of this place.

The form of Fort Niagara, with the exception of its east

front, is irregular, being adapted to the brow of the banks; and all its faces, with the same exception, are only musket proof. Lying as it does, under the command of the English Fort George, no defence can be expected from it against a cannonade; and it might even be prudent for the greater security of the garrison, if such an event is to be apprehended, to cut down the pickets on the sides exposed. It will certainly be unwise to attempt making ourselves equal to the enemy in batteries, for we have but few pieces of ordnance, and I believe no means of procuring more. Such works would only cause a useless expense of time and labour. But if this post should be conceived (as I apprehend it will) important to cover a landing on the English shore—to protect a retreat, and to command the entrance of the river, we cannot too soon make the commencement of a considerable battery. I will make the necessary plans, and a particular representation, if you consider the object of sufficient importance, and will honour me with a requisition.

Lieut. Col. Fenwick to Maj. General Van Rensselaer.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

Sir,—

Lieut. Col. Christie is of opinion, after the ammunition and ordnance stores are removed, that a subaltern's guard will be sufficient for the protection of the boats and the remaining stores; and that his officers and men, full of ardour, and anxious to give their country a proof of their patriotism, by being engaged in the first expedition, induces me *to solicit, as a favour*, that you will allow him and his detachment to accompany me this night. I think it essential, that, if a blow is struck, it should place us upon such ground as will prevent the enemy from giving us a check. Col. Christie, after placing a strong guard, and invalids, can march with three hundred effectives. As silence will be necessary on our march to Lewiston, would you permit two

cavalry to attend me, that the sentries on the road may be acquainted with our movements.

I am, &c. &c.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Lieut. Col. Fenwick.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, Oct. 10th, 1812.

Sir,—

I have received your letter of this evening, acquainting me that Lieut. Col. Christie is desirous of marching with his men to this place, to share in the contemplated movement. Upon Col. Christie's leaving a sufficient guard for the ordnance stores, I most cheerfully grant his request. But it will be necessary for him to march by 11 o'clock this night, to be here in season.

I am, &c. &c.

Lieut. Col. Fenwick.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Dearborn.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, October 14th, 1812.

Sir,—

As the movements of this army under my command, since I had the honour to address you on the 8th, have been of a very important character, producing consequences serious to many individuals, establishing facts actually connected with the interest of the service, and the safety of the army; and, as I stand prominently responsible for some of these consequences, I beg leave to explain to you, sir, and through you to my country, the situation and circumstances in which I have had to act, and the reasons and motives which governed me; and if the result is not all that might have been wished, it is such, that, when the whole ground shall be viewed, *I shall cheerfully submit myself to the judgment of my country.*

In my letter of the 8th instant, I apprised you that the crisis in this campaign was rapidly advancing; and that (to repeat the same) "the blow must be soon struck," or all

the toil and expense of the campaign go for nothing, for the whole will be tinged with dishonour.

Under such impressions, I had, on the 5th instant, written to Brig. Gen. Smyth of the United States forces, requesting an interview with him, Major Gen. Hall, and the commandants of regiments, for the purpose of conferring on the subject of future operations. I wrote Maj. Gen. Hall to the same purport. On the 11th, I had received no answer from Gen. Smyth; but in a note to me of the 10th, Gen. Hall mentioned that Gen. Smyth had not yet then agreed upon any day for the consultation.

In the mean time, the partial success of Lieut. Elliott at Black Rock, (of which, however, I have received no official information) began to excite a strong disposition in the troops to act. This was expressed to me through various channels, in the shape of an alternative, that they must have orders to act, or at all hazards they would go home. I forbear here commenting upon the obvious consequences, to me personally, of longer withholding my orders under such circumstances.

I had a conference with ———, as to the possibility of getting some person to pass over to Canada, and obtain correct information. On the morning of the 4th, he wrote to me that he had procured the man who bore his letter, to go over. Instructions were given him; he passed over—obtained such information as warranted an immediate attack. This was confidentially communicated to several of my first officers, and produced great zeal to act; more especially as it might have a controling effect upon the movement at Detroit, where it was supposed General Brock had gone with all the force he dared spare from the Niagara frontier. The best preparations in my power, were therefore made to dislodge the enemy from the heights of Queenstown, and possess ourselves of the village, where the troops might be sheltered from the distressing inclemency of the weather.

Lieut. Col. Fleming's flying artillery, and a detachment

of regular troops under his command, were ordered up in season from Fort Niagara. Orders were also sent to Gen. Smyth to send down from Buffalo such detachment from his brigade as existing circumstances in that vicinity might warrant. The attack was to be made at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 11th, by crossing over in boats from the old ferry, opposite the heights. To avoid any embarrassment in crossing the river, (which is here a sheet of violent eddies) experienced boatmen were procured to take the boats from the landing below, to the place of embarkation. Lieut. Sim was considered the man of the greatest skill for this service; he went ahead, and, in the extreme darkness, passed the intended place far up the river, and there, in the most extraordinary manner, fastened his boat to the shore, and abandoned the detachment. *In this front boat he had carried nearly all the oars* which were prepared for the boats. In this agonizing dilemma stood officers and men, whose ardour had not been cooled by exposure through the night, to one of the most tremendous north-east storms, which continued unabated for twenty-eight hours, and deluged the whole camp. Col. Van Rensselaer was to have commanded the detachment.

After this result, I had hoped the patience of the troops would have continued, until I could submit the plan suggested in my letter of the 8th, that I might act under and in conformity to the opinion which might then be expressed. But my hope was idle; the previously excited ardour seemed to have gained new heat from the late miscarriage; the brave were mortified to stop short of their object, and the timid thought laurels half won by the attempt.

On the morning of the 12th, such was the pressure upon me from all quarters, that I became satisfied that my refusal to act might involve me in suspicion, and the service in disgrace.

Lieut. Col. Christie, who had just arrived at the Four Mile Creek, had late in the night of the first contem-

plated attack, gallantly offered me his own and his men's services; but he got my permission too late. He now again came forward, had a conference with Col. Van Rensselaer, and begged that he might have the honour of a command in the expedition. The arrangement was made. Col. Van Rensselaer was to command one column of three hundred militia, and Lieut. Col. Christie a column of the same number of regular troops.

Every precaution was now adopted as to boats, and the most confidential and experienced men to manage them. At an early hour in the night Lieut. Col. Christie marched his detachment by the rear road, from Niagara to camp. At 7 in the evening, Lieut. Col. Stranahan's regiment moved from Niagara Falls; at 8 o'clock, Mead's, and at 9, Lieut. Col. Bloom's regiment marched from the same place. All were in camp in good season. Agreeably to my orders issued upon this occasion, the two columns were to pass over together as soon as the heights should be carried. Lieut. Col. Fenwick's flying artillery was to pass over; then Major Mullany's detachment of regulars, and the other troops to follow in order.

Col. Van Rensselaer, with great presence of mind, ordered his officers to proceed with rapidity, and storm the fort. The service was gallantly performed, and the enemy driven down the hill in every direction. Soon after this, both parties were considerably reinforced, and the conflict was renewed in various places. Many of the enemy took shelter behind a stone guard-house, where a piece of ordnance was now briskly served. I ordered the fire of our battery to be directed upon the guard-house; and it was so effectually done, that, with eight or ten shot, the fire was silenced. The enemy then retreated behind a large store-house; but, in a short time, the rout became general, and the enemy's fire was silenced, except from a one gun battery, so far down the river as to be out of the reach of our heavy ordnance, and our light pieces could not silence it. A number

of boats now passed over unannoyed, except by the one unsilenced gun. For some time, after I passed over, the victory appeared complete; but, in expectation of further attacks, I was taking measures for fortifying my camp immediately; the direction of this service I committed to Lieut. Totten of the Engineers. But very soon the enemy were reinforced by a detachment of several hundred Indians from Chippewa; they commenced a furious attack, but were promptly met and routed by the rifle and bayonet. By this time, I perceived my troops were embarking very slowly. I passed immediately over to accelerate their movements, but, to my utter astonishment, I found, that, at the very moment when complete victory was in our hands, the ardour of the unengaged troops had entirely subsided. I rode in all directions; urged the men by every consideration to pass over—but in vain. Lieut. Col. Bloom, who had been wounded in the action, returned, mounted his horse, and rode through the camp, as did also Judge Peck, who happened to be here, exhorting the companies to proceed—but all in vain.

At this time a large reinforcement from Fort George was discovered coming up the river. As the battery on the hill was considered an important check against their ascending the heights, measures were immediately taken to send them a fresh supply of ammunition, as I learned there were left only twenty shot for the eighteen-pounders. The reinforcements, however, obliqued to the right from the road, and formed a junction with the Indians, in the rear of the heights. Finding, to my infinite mortification, that no reinforcement would pass over, seeing that another severe conflict must soon commence, and knowing that the brave men at the heights were quite exhausted, and nearly out of ammunition, all I could do, was to send them a fresh supply of cartridges. At this critical moment I despatched a note to Gen. Wadsworth, acquainting him with our situation, leaving the course to be pursued much to his own judgment, with assurance that, if he thought best to retreat, I would

endeavour to send as many boats as I could command, and cover his retreat, by every fire I could safely make; but the boats were dispersed; many of the boatmen had fled panic struck, and but few got off. My note, however, could but little more than have reached Gen. W., about 4 o'clock, when a most severe and obstinate conflict commenced, and continued about half an hour, with a tremendous fire of cannon, flying artillery, and musketry. The enemy succeeded in repossessing their battery, and gaining advantage on every side. The brave men who had gained the victory, exhausted of strength and ammunition, and grieved at the unpardonable neglect of their fellow-soldiers, gave up the conflict.

I can only add, that the victory was really won, but lost for the want of a small reinforcement; *one-third part of the idle men might have saved all.*

I have the honour to be, &c.

STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER.

Hon. William Eustis, Secretary of War.

Brigadier General Alexander Smyth to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Buffalo, 29th September, 1812.

Sir,—

I have been ordered by Major General Dearborn to Niagara, to take command of a brigade of the U. S. troops; and directed, on my arrival in the vicinity of your quarters, to report myself to you, which I now do. I intended to have reported myself personally; but the conclusions I have drawn as to the interests of the service, have determined me to stop at this place, for the present. From the description I have had of the river below the falls, the view of the shore below Fort Erie, and the information received as to the preparations of the enemy, I am of opinion that our crossing should be effected between Fort Erie and Chippewa. It has, therefore, seemed to me proper to encamp the U. S. troops near Buffalo, there to prepare for offensive operations.

Your instructions, or better information, may decide you to give me different orders, which I will await.

I have the honour, &c.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Brigadier General Alexander Smyth.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 30th September, 1812.

Sir,—

On my return, this moment, from Niagara, I received your letter of yesterday, advising me of your arrival at Buffalo, and the encampment, there, of the United States troops, in consequence of the conclusions you have drawn that offensive operations against Upper Canada ought to be attempted between Fort Erie and Chippewa. Nothing could be more unpleasant to me than a difference of opinion as to the *place* of commencing those operations in which our own characters, the fate of the army, and the deepest interests of our country are concerned. But, however willing I may be, as a citizen soldier, to surrender my opinion to a professional one, I can only make such surrender to an opinion deliberately formed upon a view of the whole ground.

It would have been highly gratifying to me, could I have had a seasonable opportunity to avail myself of the opinions of the officers of the United States troops, as to the time, place, and competent force for the contemplated descent. But as the season for operations was far advanced, and as the counsel I wished was not at command, it has been the task of my own judgment, guided by the best attainable information to designate the places for our operations. This I had some time ago decided: and although, on account of my small force, I have been obliged to bestow much labour on measures calculated for defence, in case of an attack, still have I urged, as fast as possible, other local preparations, connected with that mode of descent on which I had determined. My judgment may have deceived me, but I shall certainly stand acquitted of a hasty decision. For many years, I have had a general knowledge of the banks of Ni-

agara river, and of the adjacent country on the Canada shore. I have, now, attentively explored the American side with the view of military operations; combining, at the same time, a great variety of circumstances and considerations intimately connected, in my opinion, with our object. So various are the opinions, and such the influence of personal and local interests in this vicinity, that many circumstances are to be carefully balanced before any correct conclusions can be drawn. My decision has been made with due regard to all these things, and to the important consequences connected with it. All my past measures have been calculated for one point; and I now only wait for a competent force; as the season of the year and every consideration urges me to act with promptness, I cannot hastily listen to a change of position, necessarily connected with a new system of measures, and the very great inconvenience of the troops. I will not say that *no considerations* shall induce me to change my plans of operations, but to this I cannot yield, without very weighty reasons; conclusions drawn, at least, from an attentive examination of the banks of the Niagara river, and all other circumstances connected with a successful result of the campaign.

I hope soon to have the pleasure of seeing you here; and, perhaps, after conference and thorough examination of the river and country, your opinion and mine, as to the plans of operations, may coincide. I trust we are both open to conviction, and we have but one object—the best interest of the service.

I am, sir, with consideration and respect, &c.

Brigadier Gen. Alexander Smyth, of the United States forces, Buffalo.

Brigadier General Smyth, of the U. S. Forces, to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Camp, near Buffalo, Oct. 2d, 1812.

Sir,—

I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 30th Sept., dated at Lewiston. The detachments of Col

Winder and Col. Parker have arrived. They are recruits without clothing and with little instruction. Neither of them have medicine chests. Col. Winder's detachment is already encamped on an excellent piece of ground for exercise, where Col. Parker's will join it to-day. Col. Milton's detachment will also arrive to-day; and within a week I expect the other detachments. I have taken quarters at the place, and propose to devote six hours daily to their instruction, in discipline and evolutions.

The delay of a part until the whole arrive, cannot, possibly, be injurious, and any order I may receive will be obeyed with alacrity.

There has been a mutiny in the 5th, and a general court martial has become necessary. Should you deem it proper to order one to be held at this camp, Col. Parker might preside, and the other members be detached by my Brigade Major.

I have the honour to be very respectfully, &c.

Major Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Brigadier General Smyth.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 5th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

Believing that an early consultation of general officers, commandants of regiments, and corps on this frontier will promote the interest of the service, I have to request that you will be pleased to confer with Maj. Gen. Hall on the subject, and agree with him upon the earliest day possible, consistent with the business of the court martial, and other indispensable duties, when I can have the pleasure of seeing you at Fort Niagara for the purpose above proposed.

Of the day agreed upon, you will please to give me early notice.

I am, &c.

P. S. I have written to Maj. Gen. Hall to the same purport.

Brig. Gen. Smyth, of the U. S. forces.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Hall.

(CONFIDENTIAL)

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 5th Oct., 1812.

Sir—

This letter was the same as above.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Brigadier General Smyth, of the U. S. forces.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 6th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

Apprehending that my letter of yesterday, on the subject of the proposed conference at Niagara, may not have been sufficiently explicit, I deem it necessary to add, that my intention was, that Major General Hall, yourself, and the *Commandants of the several regiments of the United States troops*, should attend the conference. You will please to make the necessary communications to the gentlemen intended.

I am, &c.

Brigadier General Smyth, of the U. S. forces.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Hall.

Same date as above, and same in form and substance, except as to extending the communications.

Buffalo, Oct. 10th, 1812.

Major General Hall to Major General Van Rensselaer.

(EXTRACT.)

Sir,—

I saw General Smyth yesterday: he could not tell the day when he would attend at Niagara for the consultation.

I am, &c.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Brigadier General Smyth.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 10th October, 1812.

Sir,—

In consequence of some intelligence recently receiv-

ed, relative to the force of the enemy on the opposite shore, I shall this night attack the enemy's batteries on the heights of Queenstown. Should we succeed, I shall, to-morrow morning, cross over and intrench.

Immediately on the receipt of this you will please to give orders to all the United States troops under your command to strike their tents, and march, with every possible despatch, to this place.

With respect and consideration, &c.

Brigadier General Alex. Smyth, of the U. S. forces.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Brigadier General Smyth.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 11th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

The object of my order to you yesterday, to march your troops to this place, was to support the militia in an attack upon the enemy's batteries in Queenstown, warranted by information which I had received, too direct to be doubted, and too favourable to be passed by without an effort. But the expedition has failed; and the failure is owing to some circumstances vitally connected with the highest interest of the service, but the particulars are more proper for the subject of personal conference than for this mode of communication; I shall, therefore, reserve them until I shall have the pleasure of seeing you here. In the interim the United States troops under your command will remain at their encampment, near Buffalo.

I am, &c.

Brigadier General Smyth, of the U. S. forces.

Brigadier General Smyth to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Camp, near Buffalo, 12th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter at ten o'clock, P. M.

The badness of the weather and roads harassed the

troops yesterday more than can well be conceived. To-morrow I expect their clothing, and they will wash; next day they might march, to the number of 1200 effective men, but imperfectly disciplined. It is said the enemy are in considerable force opposite to Black Rock: and as Lieut. Cols. Scott and Christie have arrived with you, the time for your attack is favourable—and may you conquer! is my prayer.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
Your most obedient,
(Signed) ALEX. SMYTH, Brig. General.

Major Gen. Van Rensselaer.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Brigadier General Smyth.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 12th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

I have this moment received your letter of yesterday. To-night I shall, again, attack the enemy's batteries on the heights of Queenstown; should circumstances render it necessary to march your brigade, I will advise you to morrow. Lieut. Col. Christie has arrived with boats, stores, &c.

I am &c.

Brigadier General Smyth, of the U. S. Forces.

EXTRACT.

From Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Brock.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 17th Sept., 1812.

Sir,—

In a communication which I had some time since the honour of receiving from Lieut Col. Myers, he assured me that it had been the constant study of the general officer, commanding the British forces on this line, to discountenance, by all means in his power, the warfare of sentinels; yet, occurrences for some days past, would warrant the presumption, that such orders no longer exist. If so be the fact, I wish to be ascertained of it.

I have the honour to be,
with consideration, &c.

EXTRACT.

From Major General Brock to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Fort George, Sept. 17th, 1812.

Sir,—

It has been with the utmost regret, that I have perceived, within these few days, a very heavy firing from both sides of the river. I am, however, given to understand, that on all occasions it has commenced on yours; and, from the circumstance of the flag which I did myself the honour to send over yesterday having been repeatedly fired upon, while in the act of crossing the river, I am inclined to give full credit to the correctness of the information. Without, however, recurring to the past, you may rely upon my repeating my positive orders against the continuance of a practice which can only be injurious to individuals, without promoting the object which both our nations may have in view.

I have the honour to remain,
with respect, &c.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Brock.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 20th Sept., 1812.

Sir,—

It was with extreme regret and concern that I yesterday learned through Lieut Col. Myers, that in a repetition of the practice of firing between sentinels, which I have so peremptorily prohibited, one shot has proved fatal to a man at the Lime Kilns on the Canada shore. Immediately, on receiving information of this unfortunate event, I caused strict inquiry to be made, to the end, that the offender, if discovered, might be punished according to his demerit. But the result of this inquiry has not furnished me with the least evidence against any man. I cannot ascertain that a single gun has been fired, at, or near the place from whence the shot was supposed to have been thrown.

That these firings have been repeatedly *commenced on* both sides, is not to be questioned: the fact is established, by the testimony of officers whose rank and character, in both armies, utterly precludes all doubt. It is a circumstance, which, in this explanation, ought not to be omitted, that there may be, on both sides the river,—there certainly is reason to believe there are on this side—persons not under *immediate* command in either army, who, occasionally, approach the river, discharge their pieces, at the sentries, and then escape unobserved in their retreats, while the fire, thus begun, is returned upon an unoffending sentinel. I have caused patrols to be sent out to take such persons, but without success.

I can only repeat, sir, that I deeply regret the unfortunate occurrence which has happened; that my orders against the practice which has occasioned it have been most peremptory: my efforts to enforce them are unremitting, and every attempt to convict any one of disobedience, as yet, is unavailing.

With consideration and high respect,
I have the honour, &c.

Major General Brock, Fort George.

From Major General Isaac Brock to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Fort George, 23d Sept., 1812.

Sir,—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the twentieth instant. I never doubted for a moment that the firing from your side of the river, upon individuals, was contrary to your intentions, and in violation of your orders, and I beg leave to repeat, that every effort shall be made on my part to prevent a recurrence of such acts of insubordination, on this side.

I have the honour to be,
with very great respect, &c.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Brock.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 13th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

Humanity induces me to request your permission to send to Queenstown some surgeons to attend the officers and men who have had the misfortune to be wounded this day, and are prisoners at Queenstown.

Agreeably to the proposition which I had this afternoon the honour to receive, as coming from you, I have agreed to a cessation of firing for three days.

I have the honour, &c.

Major General Isaac Brock.

Major General Sheaffe to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Fort George, 13th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

I lose not a moment in acknowledging the receipt of your letter of this date, and am pl ased to learn, at the same time, that the officer commanding at Queenstown, having opened it, had acceded to your proposal of sending surgeons to aid the wounded prisoners, without incurring the delay which would have been occasioned by a reference to me; but, as our means of affording assistance to them, as well as to our own wounded, may be inadequate, I beg leave to propose that the wounded prisoners, whose cases may admit of removal, should be sent over to you, on condition of not serving again, until regularly exchanged.

Though the proposition which I had the honour of making to you to-day, did not go to the extent which, by some mistake, you were led to suppose, yet I readily concur with you in agreeing to a cessation of firing for three days, and I transmit orders to that effect to the officers commanding at the several posts on this line.

I have the honour, &c.

Major General Van Rensselaer, commanding Lewiston.

Major General Sheaffe to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Fort George, 16th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

I have heard with great regret, that Col. Van Rensselaer is badly wounded. If there be any thing at my command, that your side of the river cannot furnish, which would be either useful or agreeable to him, I beg that you will be so good as to have me apprised of it.

I have the honour to be, sir, with much esteem,

Your very devoted servant,

R. H. SHEAFFE.

Major General Sheaffe to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Fort George, 16th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

As the period assigned to the cessation of hostilities is drawing to a termination; and the intended exchange of prisoners and sending over the wounded and the militia will require much more time than remains of it; and as, moreover, part of this day is to be devoted to paying the last offices of humanity to the remains of my departed friend and General, I feel it to be my duty to propose a prolongation of the armistice to such a period as may be necessary for the complete execution of those humane purposes. Lists are prepared for all the prisoners here, distinguishing those of the line from militia; and Brigade Major Evans, who has been appointed by me to arrange the business with Capt. Dox, will be ready to proceed in it, as soon as that officer comes over.

I have the honour, &c.

Major General Van Rensselaer.

Major General Van Rensselaer to Major General Sheaffe.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, Oct. 16th, 1812.

Sir,--

I have this moment had the honour to receive your

two letters of the present date. I most cheerfully agree to extend the cessation of hostilities for a time amply sufficient to discharge all duties of humanity to the brave who are wounded, or prisoners; and the just tribute of respect to the gallant dead. For these purposes I agree to the further cessation of hostilities, until 4 o'clock of the afternoon of the 19th instant.

I shall order a salute for the funeral of General Brock to be fired here, and at Fort Niagara, this afternoon.

You will please to accept, sir, the grateful acknowledgments of Col. Van Rensselaer and myself, for your kind offer of any thing in your power which might contribute to to his comfort. I do not know that he is at present destitute of any thing essential.

As this, sir, is probably the last communication I shall have the honour to make to you from this station, I avail myself of the opportunity to tender you the assurance of my great esteem and consideration.

Major General Sheaffe to Major General Van Rensselaer.

Fort George, 16th Oct., 1812.

Sir,—

I feel too strongly the generous tribute which you propose to pay to my departed friend and chief, to be able to express the sense I entertain of it. Noble-minded as he was, so would he have done himself.

I have directed the prolongation of the armistice until four o'clock in the afternoon of the 19th instant, to be communicated along this line.

I feel a perfect confidence, sir, that nothing will be omitted on your part to ensure a strict execution of the agreement respecting the militia officers and men, as well as any others not yet exchanged, who are released from their captivity.

Allow me, sir, to express a hope that the time is not far distant when the restoration of peace and amity between our

respective countries, may afford me an opportunity of assuring you, personally, of the respect and esteem with which

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient and devoted servant,

R. H. SHEAFFE, Maj. General, &c.

Maj. General Van Rensselaer.

Head-Quarters, Fort Washington, May 26th, 1797.

Sir,—

You are, this day, to cross the Ohio river, with your troop, and to commence your march for Knoxville, in the state of Tennessee, without one moment's unnecessary delay.

You will proceed by easy marches, on the most convenient road for Fort Blount, on the Cumberland river. Should you discover on your approach to, or arrival at this place, that the Indians are hostilely disposed, you are to fall back, either to Nashville, or take some intermediate secure position, where your cavalry can be well subsisted, and wait the arrival of Lieut. Col. Commandant Butler, whose orders you are to receive.

But should you find the Indians in a state of tranquillity, you will proceed on to Knoxville, with due military precaution and on your arrival there, will report to the senior officer on that station, and require quarters and subsistence for your men and horses, where you are to wait the arrival of Col. Butler, unless otherwise disposed of under the authority of the president.

Wishing you an agreeable tour, I remain with much friendship, your obedient servant,

JA. WILKINSON, B. G., &c.

Captain Van Rensselaer.

New-York, August 8th, 1800.

Dear sir,—

Major Rensselaer, who was eldest captain of dragoons before the late augmentation of the army, was, under that augmentation promoted to a major. He has some time

since devoted himself to military affairs, as a professor for life, and is unwilling to quit. For my part I have conceived there was a discretion in the president on this subject, which may be exercised in favour of the major. A field officer for the cavalry appears to me in every view proper. For the character of Major Van Rensselaer, as an officer, I refer you to Gen. Wilkinson, with whom he served. The inquiry I know will result greatly in his favour, and as a man, there is none more worthy: he is a kinsman of Mrs. Hamilton.

With esteem and regard,

A. HAMILTON, Secretary of War.

Extract of a letter from General Wilkinson to the Secretary of War.

City of Washington, August 9th, 1800.

General Hamilton warmly recommends the retention of Major Van Rensselaer in service; but I fear the ground he takes is not tenable, though the circumstance is undoubtedly essential to the service, and is devoutly to be desired, as the major is a gem worthy preservation. A squadron of cavalry without a leader, is an unseemly thing; and not unlike a body without a head, from which much good cannot be expected.

Mr. Van Rensselaer's pretensions to patronage are peculiarly strong. On the 20th August, 1794, he received a shot through his lungs, at the head of the troop. At the reduction of the then army, he continued in service, and on the levy of the late contingent force he was taken from his troop and promoted to a majority. The disbanding this force has, I fear, thrown him out of service, unless you may judge proper to retain him on the ground of expediency, until the president or legislature may be consulted. Certain it is, he is essential to the formation and discipline of the squadron, which, without a chief, presents an original spectacle.

Albany, 19th Nov., 1800.

Sir,--

Whether a major for the cavalry of United States

should be retained in service, is a question on which it would not be proper for me to make any remarks.

But if it should be deemed expedient, that such an officer should be retained, I take the liberty of informing you, that, from what I have heard and know of Major Solomon Van Rensselaer, who wishes to devote himself to the military profession, I really think he merits the attention of government.

His qualifications and conduct as an officer have probably been made known to you by Gen. Wilkinson and others. His character here as a citizen and a gentleman, attracts general esteem: and for my own part, I consider him as one of the most valuable and promising young men that I know.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN JAY.

The Honourable Samuel Dexter, Esq., Secretary at War.

APPENDIX, No. III.

State of New-York,

GENERAL ORDERS.

Head Quarters, Albany, July 13th, 1812.

Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer having been requested to repair to the command of the militia heretofore ordered into the service, and to be hereafter ordered into the service of the United States, for the defence of the northern and western frontiers of this state, between St. Regis and Pennsylvania, enters upon his command this day.

All the militia comprehended in the brigades of detached militia organized into the first detached division, by general orders of the eighteenth day of June last, together with the corps commanded by Lieut. Cols. Swift, Flemming, and Bellinger, are hereby declared to be subject to the division orders of Major General Van Rensselaer, without waiting for further general orders upon that subject; and all officers commanding the militia, from which the first detached division was taken are promptly to obey and respect such division orders accordingly.

By order of the commander in chief,

Wm. S. Wilkin, Aid-de-camp, p. t.

Head-Quarters, Niagara, Aug. 13th, 1812.

Major General Van Rensselaer having been appointed to the command of the troops on the northern and western frontiers of this State, announces his arrival. Having assumed this command, the general assures the officers and soldiers, that, as on their part he will require prompt obedience to orders, and strict discipline, so from him they may

expect his unremitting exertions to render their situations at all times as eligible as possible; and when their exertions shall be called for against the enemy, he trusts with confidence that they will be such as will redound to the honour of the troops, and the service of the country.

The troops at Lewiston will be reviewed and inspected at 10 o'clock to-morrow; for that purpose, blank returns will be furnished.

An accurate inspection return will be made out by the commanding officers of companies, who are to account for their men, arms, and accoutrements: in their returns, they will note the deficiencies of arms or accoutrements, to the end that measures may be adopted to obtain supplies from the proper departments.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 16th Aug., 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Major General Hall will please to order the troops in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, to repair to Lewiston as soon as as may be convenient, reserving a necessary guard at that place until it shall be relieved by a detachment from Lieut. Col. Swift's regiment. The court-martial whereof Brigadier General Wadsworth is President, will adjourn to headquarters, and there finish the business before them.

The troops between Lewiston and Fort Niagara will, with their baggage, march to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock, to Lewiston, leaving guards at the places heretofore occupied for watching the movements of the enemy. The quartermaster will furnish the necessary transportation.

Lieut. Col. Swift will furnish small guards of observation, from Buffalo to the Falls of Niagara inclusive. They are to communicate to the General in Chief, by runners, any movements of the enemy, with all possible despatch.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 18th Aug. 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Major General Dearborn having communicated, that, agreeably to an arrangement made between him and the Governor General of Canada, through his Adjutant General, all hostilities between the troops on either side should be suspended until further orders. Major General Van Rensselaer directs the officers and soldiers under his command, strictly to conform to this arrangement; and if any of the troops have the hardihood to fire on the enemy, they will be punished accordingly.

Lieut. Col. Swift will order under arrest Capt. Dogherty of his regiment, for absenting himself from his company; and will investigate the cause of the firing of a field piece at Black Rock, on the opposite shore; and by whom, and report the facts to the Major General without delay.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 19th Aug,. 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Countersign, parole.

Officer of the day to-morrow, Lt. Col. Dobbins.

Adjutant, G. L. Dox.

The Major General directs that the following regulations shall be observed by the troops under his command:—

The reveille will be beat at day-break when every officer and soldier will appear on parade, and the companies be exercised by their respective commanding officers for one hour, and the like time at 4 o'clock in the afternoon; and by battalions, on Tuesdays and Fridays of each week, at the company and battalion parades. The field officers will attend and superintend the manœuvres of their corps. The troop will beat at 9 o'clock, A. M., and the retreat at

6 o'clock, P. M., when the line will be formed for roll-call; the music will take their post on the right of the regiments, and not on the right of companies. On those occasions, the dress of the officers and soldiers is to be clean, and their arms and accoutrements bright and in perfect order. The Major General flatters himself that the troops will vie with each other in the cleanliness of their dress, as well as their soldier-like and orderly conduct, when on, or off duty. The corps which shall distinguish itself for orderly conduct and discipline, shall be reported by the Major General to the Commander in Chief; and every refractory officer or soldier shall be dealt with as the law and the usages of armies point out: for as they are called upon by their country to defend it, and paid for their services, it is expected that "*every man will do his duty*," for on that the lives of the troops, the honour and success of the enterprises in which, in all probability, they will shortly be engaged, will depend.

The tattoo will be beat at 9 o'clock, when the men will retire to their tents, and the sentinels begin to challenge.

Two captains, and two subaltern guards will be mounted daily; one captain's guard will take post on the front, and one in the rear of the camp; and the subalterns on each flank. The guards will be sufficiently strong to form a chain of sentinels round the camp; and they will be augmented, or diminished as occasion may require. The guards will assemble on the grand parade, at half past 9 o'clock, when they will be formed by the major of brigade and marched off precisely at 10 o'clock. A portion of the music of the line will attend and do duty until the guards are marched off to their respective pickets. The adjutants will march the men detached from the respective regiments, for this service, to the grand parade, and will be responsible for the soldier like appearance of the men, arms, and accoutrements. Each man of the guard will be furnished with twenty-four rounds of fixed cartridges: their pieces will be

loaded after sunset; and when the guards are relieved, they will return to the grand parade, from whence they will be marched in a body, by the officer of the day, to some convenient spot, where their pieces will be discharged at a target, of the size of a dollar, at one hundred yards distance. And on all other occasions firing is strictly prohibited, unless it be by the sentinels, at night, to give the alarm.

The officer of the day will be taken from the regimental field officers; whose duty it shall be, to visit the guards and sentinels three times in the course of the day and three times at night; to regulate the guards, to see that they are vigilant and in soldier-like order; for on their alertness the lives of the men and the safety of the army depend.

The officers are strictly enjoined to attend to the cleanliness of their men; they must frequently visit their tents, and examine the situation of them. On the faithful performance of this duty depend the lives and health of the troops.

The commanding officers of regiments and corps will cause two vaults, or sinks, to be dug in the rear of each company, at least one hundred yards in the rear of the rear tents, in a line parallel to the tents: and if any soldier shall be found to leave excrement in any other place within the line of sentinels, he will be punished.

The ground in front and rear of the tent is to be levelled and cleared by the respective companies. The Brigade Major will direct the Adjutants to cause the music, when not on duty, to practise the different calls and marches.

The Court Martial, whereof Brigadier General Wadsworth was appointed President, will meet to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, for the trial of such prisoners as may be brought before them. General Wadsworth will please to make the necessary arrangements, and meet in such place as he may think convenient.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-Camp.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, August 22d, 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Parole.

Countersign,

Officer of the day to-morrow,

Adjutant,

It is painful to the Major General to find that some part of the troops are so regardless of their duty as to disobey the orders issued for preventing scattering firing in and about the camp. This dangerous and disgraceful practice is once more, and for the last time, prohibited. If any man of the line (the guards and sentinels excepted) shall, after this, discharge his fire-arms without orders, he will be instantly confined; and the field and company officers are strictly enjoined to enforce this order.

The Major General regrets that he is compelled to remind the officers under his command of the necessity of being in camp at night: for if *they* will be regardless of their duty, what can be expected of their *men* by such an example? They are, in future, directed to be at night in their tents, unless otherwise ordered; and in perfect readiness, at any moment, to commence or repel an attack, to which troops in the face of an enemy are at all times liable.

The officers and troops meet with the perfect approbation of the Major General, for their alertness in parading at reveille; with the exception of one or two companies, which were not this morning on parade, and the captain of one company not in camp. But let him beware for the future; if caution and remonstrance will avail nothing, more decisive measures shall.

To-morrow being the Sabbath, the guards will not discharge their pieces until Monday, after roll-call; and this regulation will be observed until further orders.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-Camp.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, August 28th, 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The army under the command of Brigadier General Hull has surrendered at Detroit. This is a national disaster; but it is the duty of *soldiers* to turn even disasters to profit. To this end the General calls upon the troops under his command to make every effort in perfecting that discipline on which they must rely for their own safety and for their country's honour, in that crisis which may be fast approaching. The General is persuaded that Americans know the inestimable rights which they enjoy; and he confidently trusts, that their bravery to defend is in proportion to the knowledge they possess of those rights.

The troops will be exercised at reveille, and from four o'clock in the afternoon, two hours instead of one, as mentioned in general orders of the 19th instant.

Capt. Dogherty and Lieut. Hewit, of Lieut. Col. Swift's regiment, are released from their arrests, and will return to their duty. This renewed instance of clemency of the Major General, it is hoped, will be properly appreciated by them: it is not his wish to punish, but orders must and shall be obeyed.

The unhealthy state of the troops under the command of Lieut. Col. Swift, at Black Rock, renders particular attention to them, and to the causes of their maladies, necessary. For this purpose Doctor Brown will associate with him Doctor Daniel Chipman; and they will proceed, without delay, to that place, and make full inquiry into the situation of the sick, the causes which have produced the diseases, and the manner in which they have been treated; of all which they will make report, in writing, to the Major General; suggesting the best mode, in their opinion, to restore those who are sick, and preserve the health of the well.

These, and all other orders, are to be read by the Adjutants to the troops under the command of the Major General

The Commanding Officers of regiments and corps will give orders accordingly.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,
SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-Camp.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 29th Aug., 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The Major General is gratified with the attention which is paid by the officers to the health of the men. Striking the tents, as has been this morning done, will in a great measure prevent disease among the troops: and the General recommends that it be done as often as occasion may require, and that cleanliness be observed, in every particular, by the individuals of the army; it is absolutely necessary to the preservation of health. It is particularly enjoined on those who have charge of the few sick, in this camp and the hospital, to see that they are well supplied with every thing necessary for their accommodation, and that expert and faithful nurses are provided to attend them.

On this occasion the General cannot refrain from expressing his satisfaction at the attention of the officers in general to their duty, and the orderly conduct of the soldiers in obeying orders: such cheerful and soldier-like behaviour is to him a pleasing presage of what he has to expect from them in the hour "which will try men's souls."

To the Commanding Officer of the 7th brigade, and to the Colonels of the 18th and 20th regiments, the General tenders his acknowledgments, for their strict attention to the discipline of the troops and the preservation of their health.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,
COL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-Camp.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 4th Sept., 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The Major General announces to the troops, that, agree-

able to an order received from Major General Dearborn, the armistice entered into between him and the Governor General of Upper and Lower Canada will be terminated at twelve o'clock, at noon, on the eighth day of September instant.

The troops under his command will, however, understand, explicitly, that they are not to act offensively without previous orders from him; but to be vigilant in their duty, and ready to execute any command they may receive when a proper occasion presents itself.

The troops will strike their tents to-morrow morning at reveille: the tents, tent-poles, and baggage, will be packed up, ready to move, in one hour from that time. The Quarter Master will measure the space necessary for a double row of tents for each company, and furnish the necessary transportation.

A fatigue party, of a sergeant, corporal, and twelve men, will attend at the same time at head quarters.

By order of the Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-Camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 9th Sept., 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Lieut. Col. Bloom will march immediately to the neighbourhood of Niagara Falls and relieve the guards of the detachment of United States' troops, under the command of Major Mullany, by his regiment. The Commanding Officer of this detachment, after being relieved by Lieut. Col. Bloom, will march with the troops under his command, without delay, and join Lieut. Col. Fenwick, and is to be subject to his orders.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-Camp.

Head Quarters, Lewiston, 6th Sept., 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Lieut. Col. George Flemming, Commanding Fort Oswego,

having assigned Walter Cotton as Surgeon of Major Charles Moseley's battalion of riflemen, the Major General confirms that assignment, and orders that Doctor Cotton do duty accordingly, in that corps, until further orders.

Major General Hall will please to take command of Lieut. Col. Swift's regiment, and the detachment of troops ordered out by Brigadier Gen. Hopkins, and make such disposition of this force, as the security of the frontiers may require; and will make weekly reports to Major General Van Rensselaer. Major General Hall will please to bear in mind, that all permits, for any persons to pass into Canada, are to be obtained only from Major General Van Rensselaer.

Lieut. Col. Bloom will make morning reports of the regiment under his command, to Major General Van Rensselaer, and will cause Mr. Rolph, the prisoner, to be delivered to Major General Hall at Black Rock.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,
SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, September 15th, 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The Quarter Master General and the Contractor will furnish, on the order of Doctor Brown, hospital surgeon, the necessary supplies for the sick in camp, and the hospital; To Doctor Brown, the surgeon of regiments, and corps will apply, for supplies necessary for the accommodation of the sick under their care; and they are strictly enjoined to attend faithfully to the sick of the Regiments and corps, to which they are assigned, whether the sick are in the camp, or hospital.

The Quarter Master General will furnish a sufficient quantity of straw, for the accommodation of the troops, in the camp and barracks: he will also furnish forage for the dragoons, and other public horses, and cause the horses of

Captain Camp's troop of volunteer cavalry to be appraised as the law directs, without delay.

Lieut. Col. Fenwick, the Quarter Master General, and the Commissary of military stores on this frontier will, without delay, make returns to Major General Van Rensselaer, of all the public property of every description under their charge.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,
SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, September 19th, 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The Major General calls the attention of the officers to the 41st, 42d, 43d, 44th, 45th, 46th, and 53d articles of war, and directs that they shall be read to the troops; if any officer or soldier, has the hardihood to violate either of them, he shall be treated as those articles direct. The shameful inattention to duty, in the face of a powerful enemy, by many of the officers and soldiers will render this resort necessary, however unpleasant it may be to the Major General.

In violation of a general order of the 19th August, several of the field officers did not attend parade duty yesterday: it is hoped that such conduct in them will not again occur; for if it should, the Major General will be compelled to resort to measures which will be very unpleasant to himself and them.

The guards will be augmented this night, and if any officer or soldier discloses the watch-word, he will be dealt with as the 53d article of the rules and articles of war directs.

The officer of the day will direct every officer and soldier to be taken up after the beating of the retreat, whether he has the countersign or not, if found out of camp without permission in writing from the Major General.

Lieut. Col. Fenwick will order a general court martial for the trial of such prisoners of the United States troops, as may

be brought before the court; and report the proceedings, without delay, to the Major General. The following members will compose the court martial.

By order of Major Gen. Van Rensselaer,
SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, September 27th, 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

Complaint having been made by the troops, as to the quality of the provisions issued by the Commissary, Major John Beach of the town of Lewiston, a disinterested person, is appointed on the part of Major General Van Rensselaer, and he, together with the person to be appointed on the part of the commissary, will, without delay, inspect the quality of the provisions, against which complaint has been made, and report their opinion, thereupon to the Major General.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,
SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 25th September, 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The detachment of Lieut. Col. Hopkins' regiment will be stationed at Tonawanta, and guard the passes on the river; and will relieve the guards of Lieut. Col. Swift's regiment, now there. All the supernumerary officers of Lieut. Col. Hopkins' regiment will be disbanded, and such only kept in service as are absolutely necessary to officer this detachment agreeable to law.

Generall Hall will give orders accordingly. Captain Ellicott's company of artillery will be stationed at the battery opposite Fort Erie, to which place one eighteen-pounder is ordered.

Returns of the state of the troops, their arms, and accoutrements, will be made to the Major General once a week,

by General Hall; and the commanding officer of the United States' troops at Fort Niagara; and they are directed to have every thing in readiness for action at a moment's warning.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN. RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, September 27th, 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

A guard of one hundred men, under the command of a Major, with their tents and baggage, will be detached this day, from Lieut. Col. Bloom's regiment, to protect the boats in Gill Creek. Lieut. Col. Bloom will give orders accordingly, and will see that this detachment is encamped at that place, before sunset this evening.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

Head-Quarters, Lewiston, 30th Sept., 1812.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The order whereof a copy is annexed, from the Commander in Chief of the United States' army, was received yesterday. All those interested are to govern themselves accordingly.

The Quarter Master General will purchase twenty horses, and ——— yoke of oxen, for the ordnance department, with yokes, chains, &c. complete, and furnish the necessary forage for the horses and oxen. The Quarter Master General will make a return of the number of public boats in his possession, and what number of private boats he can procure for the transportation of troops, cannon, horses, and stores.

The Major General regrets that he is again compelled to remind the Quarter Master General of the want of forage

for the light artillery and dragoon horses, and directs that it shall be furnished without delay; and, in future, regularly.

Those light infantry companies which have already, or may hereafter arrive, excepting Capt. Dox's company, will take possession of the first cantonment below Lewiston, and will be subject to the orders of Major Thomas Lee, who is directed to take charge of them until further orders. The rifle company now there, will take post at the old ferry above Lewiston. Major Mosely of the rifle corps will take command of the rifle companies which are now in camp, or may hereafter arrive, until further orders.

By order of Major General Van Rensselaer,

SOL. VAN RENSSELAER, Aid-de-camp.

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